

Monroe County Legislature

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DEMOCRATIC LEADER

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COMMITTEES:
Environment & Public Works
Ways & Means

January 7, 2005

To the Honorable
Monroe County Legislature
39 West Main Street
Rochester, New York 14614

Re: Establishing a Public Health Task Force to Review a Recent University at Albany Study Regarding Respiratory Disease in Relation to Identified ZIP Codes in Monroe County

Honorable Legislators:

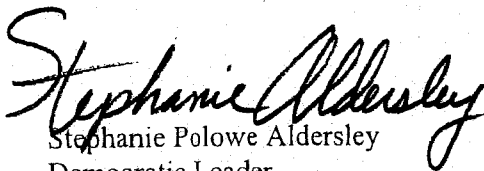
Protection of the public's health and safety are among the most serious responsibilities of government. When a potential threat is identified, elected officials have an obligation to respond in a deliberate fashion by identifying the extent of the risk and the steps that can be taken to mitigate potentially deleterious effects on their constituents. A recent study by researchers from the State University of New York at Albany has identified 13 zip codes in the Monroe County area in which residents are up to 20 percent more likely to be hospitalized for respiratory diseases as a result of residing near hazardous waste sites.


Communities with ZIP codes in Monroe County that are identified in the report include: Brockport, East Rochester, Spencerport, Webster, Gates, Rochester, Greece, Irondequoit, and Chili.


With such stark findings, it is imperative that Monroe County government live up to its responsibility to protect the public's health and safety and thoroughly investigate what actions can be taken to eliminate or mitigate the risk factors involved. A reasonable first step in this process should be the establishment of a public health task force comprised of members with public health expertise.

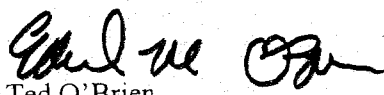
We, therefore, request that the Administration instruct the Director of the Department of Public Health to appoint a task force for the purpose of reviewing the University at Albany's study, and that the task force report back its findings to this Honorable Body within four legislative cycles. Although it is our recommendation that the composition of the task force should be determined by the Director of Public Health, we recommend that the task force be appointed from among current public health personnel and or public health experts who are willing to volunteer their time in order to avoid impacting the revenues and expenditures of the 2005 Monroe County budget.


Respectfully submitted,



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Democratic Leader


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