

For Immediate Release
April 18, 2014

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Federal agency responds to Township petition Fenimore Landfill public health assessment to be conducted

Roxbury, N.J. – The Mayor and Township Council today praised the federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) for accepting the Township’s petition of October 23, 2013 to conduct a public health assessment to evaluate hydrogen sulfide and other emissions from the Fenimore landfill. . The Township’s request was further supported by a citizen’s similar petition dated October 30th.

“We’re very pleased that the ATSDR has agreed to the Township’s request to conduct a health assessment,” Mayor Jim Rilee said. “The potential health risks caused by the landfill needs to be understood to ensure that the health and safety of residents hasn’t been compromised.”

Rilee noted that the Township received the letter from the federal agency on Wednesday, April 17. The letter stated: “The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) has accepted your petition to conduct public health assessment activities to evaluate the hydrogen sulfide and other emissions from the Fenimore Landfill. Today, a hard copy of the attached acceptance letter is being mailed to you via the US Postal Service.”

According to the ATSDR, the agency has already sent a letter to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection “expressing our concern that hydrogen sulfide emissions from the Fenimore Landfill may impact the health of the nearby community.” According to Township Manager Chris Rath, copies of the ATSDR’s letters to the Township and to the DEP have been posted on the Township’s website.

Rath said he has already responded to the ATSDR, offering any assistance from the Township for this extremely urgent matter. The Township Manager said he has instructed the Township’s Health Director to coordinate activities with the ATSDR. Representatives from the ATSDR have reported that work could begin within six weeks. Rath added that additional assistance may be sought from other agencies, such as the Morris County Department of Health.

“Now that your petition has been accepted, future ATSDR activities will be coordinated by Dr. Jill Dyken, ATSDR Environmental Health Scientist. Dr. Dyken will be the ATSDR lead investigator for any future Fenimore Landfill activities,” according to the letter sent to the Township by Sven E. Rodenbeck, Sc.D., P.E., BCEE, Rear Admiral (retired), USPHS and Acting DCHI Petition Coordinator.

“The ATSDR health assessment represents an important step in resolving the potential health impacts on our residents that were created when the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) allowed the Fenimore Landfill to be reopened,” Rilee said.

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