



For IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Philadelphia Water Department asks PADEP to deny Elcon

**Water Department analysis shows hazardous waste facility
could put millions at risk**

Falls Township, PA – The Philadelphia Water Department (PWD) conducted computer simulation using the Early Warning System (EWS) Tidal Spill Model, which was funded through a Department of Homeland Security grant and developed as a strategic initiative to protect multiple drinking water intakes. According to the Water Department’s study:

“When applying the location of the proposed Elcon facility to a simulation of a conservative contaminant using the EWS Tidal Spill Model, results indicate a chemical plume still envelops the Baxter (Water Treatment Plant) intake 90 hours or 3.75 days after the time of a spill. The Baxter drinking water intake provides 60% of the potable water to Philadelphia County. Depending upon the severity of an accidental leak or emergency, having to potentially close the Baxter intake for over 3.75 days while a chemical plume slowly moves downstream in the tidal Delaware River is catastrophic.”

The Delaware Riverkeeper Network, the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania and the Clean Air Council received a copy of the Water Department’s public comment they submitted to PADEP. The complete comment is available at:

http://www.delawariverkeeper.org/Documents/PWD%20Elcon%20Phase%201%20Permit%20Comments%2010.14.15_Final.pdf

“The Water Department’s computer simulation makes it clear – chemical leaks, a spill or an accident so close to the Delaware River could threaten the drinking water for millions of people in Philadelphia and South Jersey” said Fred Stine, Citizen Action Coordinator for the Delaware Riverkeeper Network. “Elcon will bring 175,000 tons of hazardous waste every year by train cars and trucks to a site that has a direct

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pathway to the Delaware River and directly connected to our water supply. DEP must deny this application because it places so many people at risk” said Stine.

The Delaware River in Falls Township where Elcon proposes to build its hazardous waste facility is affected by the tides. The river flows past Falls Township on an out-going tide, but then the tide pushes much of that same river water back in an in-coming tide.

PWD further state:

“As included in EWS, additional drinking water intakes located in the pathway of the plume simulation between Philadelphia and the proposed Elcon facility on the tidal Delaware River include; New Jersey American Water Delran, NJ; Aqua Pennsylvania Bristol, PA; Lower Bucks Joint Municipal Authority in Tulleytown, PA; and Burlington City, NJ.”

What happens after 4 days? “Where are those hazardous chemicals in the river in 4 days? Wilmington? Salem New Jersey?” asked Betty Tatham, Vice President, Issues and Action, League of Women Voters of PA. “That can not be acceptable to PADEP. They must act now to protect the millions of people in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware that depend on the Delaware River for their drinking water, jobs and recreation” Tatham said.

Philadelphia Water requests that PADEP deny the Phase I siting permit given the risk of multiple-day contamination of the tidal drinking water supply located downstream of the proposed Elcon facility.

"While the risk and likelihood of an accident or spill is an obvious threat to the Delaware River and the communities that rely on it, Elcon has attempted to mislead the public and the DEP in claiming this proposal is a minor source of air pollution," said Russell Zerbo, Advocacy Coordinator at the Clean Air Council. "They know well that the 25 tons per year of Nitrogen Oxide pollution they are proposing qualifies as a major source of pollution.

PADEP awarded Philadelphia Water with the Governor’s Award for Environmental Excellence in 2015, recognizing the importance of the EWS and the Tidal Spill Model for its role in protecting the water resources of the greater Philadelphia region.

Barge traffic bringing even more hazardous waste may be a possibility. The Water Departments expressed concern that:

“...since the site is on a navigable waterway, bringing in more waste by barges up the river presents even greater threats. The siting of the proposed Elcon facility in a navigable waterway, allows for the potential transport of hazardous waste on the Delaware River. Whether the hazardous waste is pre-processed or post-processed, the transport of such materials via ship or barge in the vicinity of the Philadelphia Water Baxter drinking water treatment plant intake is a significant risk to the drinking water supply of millions of people.”

The Philadelphia Water Department comment reminded PADEP of a recent chemical spill in the Elk River in West Virginia.

“In light of the extensive drinking water supply contamination in West Virginia caused by a chemical storage facility leak, Philadelphia Water would like PADEP to consider the precautionary principle when reviewing the Phase I Siting Permit for the proposed Elcon facility. The proposed facility location is within a twenty mile radius of large urban areas in both Pennsylvania and New Jersey that use the Delaware River as a drinking water supply.” #####