

## Testimony of Richard Kobik regarding S.10

Before my retirement, I was a partner in a small company, Blue Heron Construction. In the late 80's we purchased 15 A. of land with the plan of creating a housing development. This land lies just to the east, downwind and uphill, from the Chem-Fab/ St.Gobain factory. The access to this property is from Royal St. which intersects with Rt 67 A. After we received the necessary state and local permits, we started to construct the infrastructure : roads, sewer line and underground utilities. The North Bennington Water Dept. had denied our request to hook onto the municipal water system because of their concern that the old water mains on Water St. would not be able to withstand the increase in pressure necessary to supply water to the top of our development. So we proceeded with individual wells for each lot.

During the early years of constructing this development, there was often a terrible odor wafting from the Chem-Fab plant where they coated fiberglass material with Teflon and then baked it. We met with plant officials on-site and voiced our concerns, as well as the concerns of the new homeowners. The managers assured us they would seek a solution and I believe this is when they moved the baking operation into the night hours and raised the oven vent stacks. We thought we were just dealing with an odor issue, not an invisible chemical that would poison the water deep under our land.

Eventually, St. Gobain acquired the plant and production was moved out of state. In the meantime, folks were buying lots in our "North Village" development and building houses. I built a house for my son and his wife, and he lives there now with my two grandsons. Currently, there are 13 houses and 9 undeveloped lots in the neighborhood, 3 of which I own.

After PFOA was found in the nearby Hoosick Falls water system, a few wells in our development were tested by VT's DEC and very high levels of the chemical were found. Subsequently, all the wells were tested, and found to contain varying levels of PFOA. Miraculously, the only well of the 13 to test below the state standard is my son's, even so, he and his family are reluctant to drink the well water because testing has shown the concentrations to fluctuate.

To date, all of the houses above the state standard have received filtration systems, but many are still afraid to drink the filtered water, and all perceive that their property values have fallen. That is also my concern. I own 3 lots that are of greatly diminished value unless and until the municipal water system is extended to serve our neighborhood. Who wants to buy a lot and build a house knowing that their well would most likely be contaminated and a filter with the associated maintenance costs would be an ongoing headache for them. I am 69 years old, I had hoped the proceeds from the sale of these lots would support me in my retirement.

I would like to voice my support for Bill S.10, thank Sen. Champion and Sen. Sears for introducing it and encourage each of you to support it as well.

Thank you,

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