

# Frac Sand Sentinel

*...keeping watch on the industry*

**Issue: #16**

**DATE: JUNE 15, 2013**

**Jane Justesen wrote the letter below to Representative Kathy Bernier. Kathy has openly indicated she has not received complaints from citizens. This letter mentions a few concerns. There are others. The letter is a model of "civic engagement" or "civic participation" and more of us must tell our stories so that legislators and other civil employees can be engaged in application of their job responsibilities of elected officials: to protect the health, safety and welfare of their constituents. Tell Jane "thank you" for sharing her remarks!**

**Pat**

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**THE CONCERNED CHIPPEWA CITIZEN: [www.ccc-wis.com](http://www.ccc-wis.com)**

**Subject**High capacity wells

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**Date:**Sat, 15 Jun 2013 15:43:33 +0000 (UTC)

**From:**Jane Justesen

**To:**[Rep.Bernier@legis.wisconsin.gov](mailto:Rep.Bernier@legis.wisconsin.gov)

As a concerned citizen of Augusta, WI I am asking that you remove the amendment to the state budget that prevents citizens from expressing their concerns about the number and location of high capacity wells.

If you unfamiliar with our area of the state we would ask that you come and witness what is happening to our little piece of the world. We are being invaded by sand companies who are only here to rape the landscape but to remove a product that is essential for the area's well being.

They have no vested interest in our land except to remove the sand as fast as they can before it is discovered that they indeed have polluted our water supply, our air, and left a usable resource totally unproductive for at least 3 generations.

To submit to the power, the money contributions from the mines, and the political influence of these companies is incomprehensible. Are you aware that the money contributed to political officials in the last couple of years has increased from \$17,000 to \$400,000. What does that tell you?

We are at the grassroots level are trying to protect our land, our air, our water, our very existence. I belong to two organizations: Concerned Citizens of Bridge Creek and Citizens for Environmental Stewardship. We struggle financially to just keep placing ads in local newspapers to educate the public about the effects of sand mining on their health, their future, their children's future.

Companies appear daily at the doors of neighbors trying to force them into a decision that will forever change the way we live in our townships and city. The potential of hundreds of thousands of dollars is too much for some to resist. The lies that are told to these land owners prevents them from realizing the harm that they are causing to their neighbors and to the environment.

Companies seek permits and are granted them by townships who only fear that they will be sued by these huge companies. What is the benefit to our area from these land grabbing pirates. NONE. The promise of jobs in our area as well as other areas is a non-realized entity. The skill level required for these positions typically does not exist among our local workers. By the time this is realized, they are in the back door and there is no removing them. The addition of any jobs is overridden by the loss of jobs related to tourism being effected negatively.

The chemicals that they use (they refuse to tell us what they are) are leaking into our aquifers and settling into their holding ponds where they will leach into the land and the water for generations to come. It will not be in my lifetime, but our children and grandchildren will live with their effects forever.

Companies that assured us they would never do blasting are now blasting on a daily basis. Why? So they can get at the sand easier and remove this resource that has been there for millions of years. The Hi-Crush plant south of Augusta which was to be a 30 year operation will in reality probably be done in 8 years. Having witnessed what I did yesterday, I predict 5 years.

What does this blasting do to our air, our water, the neighbors? The effects will be more than just the ground moving beneath their feet and their windows rattling and cracking. The disturbance to the water flow will be felt sooner than later. They built a conveyor system for over a mile so that they would not have to truck their ill gotten gains. This conveyor runs directly in front of homes. The sand that spills from this conveyor on a daily basis lies in piles along the route of the conveyor. With the winds being fairly constant, fugitive sand can be seen blowing from the 80-100 foot stacks of sand on a daily basis.

Trains! Do you live within hearing distance of a railroad? Well I do, and I am sick of being awakened at all hours of the day and night. The train traffic through our little town has disturbed the reason most of us live here. The peace and quiet, the solitude, the safety of a rural community where neighbors used to care about each other and how we effected each others lives. No more. There are neighbors who no longer talk to each other after several generations of being good neighbors. The city is divided among those who believe that the mines represent progress and those of us who have studied at length the effects the mines will have on us. There is enough research out there to prove that what we are saying is valid about the quality of our water, our air, the health effects of silica on people and animals, as well as our landscape.

I would ask you to attend an informational meeting this coming Wednesday evening, June 19th at 7 pm at the Augusta Community Center. Dr. Crispin Pierce, a PhD in environmental health is coming to discuss the

effects of sand mining on air quality. I challenge you to attend to learn the truth about sand mining. It would provide you with truthful facts and help you learn for yourself why the amendment allowing companies to have unlimited high capacity wells is probably the worst decision our legislators could make.

Hi-Crush has been in operation for about a year. As part of their permit they were allowed to install high capacity wells. Well, at the end of last year, they installed 2 additional high capacity wells without a permit. What has the DNR done about this? Essentially nothing. Fines mean nothing to these people. They have more financial resources than even our state could match. An example of the profitability of these operations is that Hi Crush is reported to have paid for their multi million dollar operation in 89 days of operation. There was enough finger pointing as to who was to blame for this action but now the legislators are going to allow them to build high capacity wells in an unmonitored, unregulated fashion.

When Hi Crush started their operation, they ran their high capacity wells at full capacity with no meter placed on them. What kind of oversight by the DNR is this? At an air quality hearing for Hi Crush's request to blast, the DNR representative informed us that there is no one who oversees the total permitting process. Each division of the DNR acts alone and the various components of the permit are NOT reviewed as a whole. He also informed us that Hi Crush will never be inspected due to the fact that they are too small of an operation. Too small? Please come and see what this "small" operation has done to our area. Hi Crush tells us that we can come and inspect at any time, yet the DNR has no scheduled inspections. What kind of oversight is this?

You MUST remove the amendment regarding high capacity wells from the budget. To not do so is an unbelievable abuse of legislative power.

Please attend our meeting on Wednesday, June 19th at 7 pm. We guarantee it will open your eyes to what is happening to our lives.

Hi Crush is the only functioning mine in our township at this time but we can inform you of at least 4-5 others who are knocking down our doors to get here.

Proof of this is the township providing a permit to Five Star, another sand mining operation north of Augusta on Hwy. 27. It is located adjacent to the Eau Claire River and adjacent to the old city landfill. Yet it was provided with a permit to operate. Who is going to clean up the Eau Claire River and Bridge Creek when they are polluted from this operation?