

Statement of Judith Wagner

My name is Judith Wagner. I live at 1210 Beaver Tree Dr in the Watershed 55+ village of Two Rivers. I moved here in July 2020. As I moved in, I was unaware of the proposed landfill right at the edge of Two Rivers.

The Board's Chair and members have told us that your decision on the extension would need to take into account the impact that the extension itself would have on the general welfare of the surrounding community, independent of the ultimate outcome of the application. So, my remarks here focus on the impact of the time extension itself. I will show that the delay in a

final resolution of the landfill question does have harmful impacts, big ones when tallied up across 2000 plus families over months and years.

First, the delay will likely slow the County's planning and construction of badly needed improvements to Conway Road. I won't go into the safety hazards on Conway Road as it exists today as the only access to Two Rivers. But I was heartened last year to learn that the County has been conducting an assessment of the road and is in the midst of developing a plan for road improvements to make it safer.

But, what will an extension do to that process? Most probably, it will delay the county from moving

forward with road improvements as it awaits the final result of the application. Road improvements that would be needed for a largely residential traffic base are vastly different from those needed for a daily load of hundreds of tractor trailers per day. Every day of delay in modernizing Conway Road is a risk to me as I have to drive on an unimproved road.

While it's easy to dismiss this added risk of each trip as a very small added risk, please consider that every resident of Two Rivers incurs that risk with every trip on Conway Road. Tallied over the period of delay that a time extension

would cause, it is a real assault on the general health of our community.

The same is true for the elementary school currently being planned for Conway Road. Though the County appears to be on track with design and construction, an extension could cause the county to slow or pause the process while National Waste attempts to negotiate amendments to the special exception. Every month, every year, of delay in school construction deprives a whole cohort of young children of a new, uncrowded, nearby school. Regardless of the ultimate outcome of the landfill, those children can never retrieve the time lost from the delay. As a senior who plans to

volunteer at that school, I also can't regain that time.

Second, A time extension and the resulting delay in a decision affects my health. The thought that the landfill might be built is highly stressful. Scientific studies have shown a strong relationship between levels of stress and life expectancy. Stress not only affects your enjoyment of life; it can kill you.¹ (I'm attaching a link to a 2020 British Medical Journal article on this very finding.) Studies also link living in a state of uncertainty to anxiety and depression. According to a recent study in the *Journal of Neuroscience*, (and I

¹ British Medical Journal, 2020, <https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/bmjopen/10/3/e033741.full.pdf>

quote), “anxiety – an emotion prototypically associated with the anticipation of uncertain harm – has profound significance for public health...”²

In the last few years, we've all dealt with new sources of stress and anxiety. But here –right here -- is a source of anxiety that affects me at the most intimate level: the choice about where I live. An extension would threaten my ability to continue living in my neighborhood for the rest of my independent life, for as I age, it would become increasingly dangerous for me to navigate my way through a parade of long heavy dump trunks or

² Journal of Neuroscience, 2020, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32958570/>

dusty air to get to a grocery store for the basic necessities of life.

If an extension is granted, I will have to assess whether the County has the will to stop the landfill. I am already trying to judge whether I should wait the whole process out, or whether I should search for another aging-friendly house while I still have the physical ability to move. To face that choice is heartbreaking, because I've been so happy in Two Rivers.

In the meantime, though, I'll be filled with stress about the future. And so will many of my neighbors. Added stress adds up to real effects on mental and physical health and on life expectancy.

The Board can remove that added stress and uncertainty by doing the right thing – by denying the extension now.