

DEC asks for gas storage plan answers

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READING — Sponsors of the Liquid Propane Gas underground salt cave storage project and transportation hub near Watkins Glen must answer 26 questions before their draft supplemental environmental impact statement is accepted for review and public comment.

The state Department of Environmental Conservation Region 8 in Avon recently completed its review of the DSEIS.

The report was submitted March 15 by Inergy Inc. of Kansas City, Mo.

The DEC comments include these questions:

SOUND ANALYSIS: The four 15-minute noise samples were said to be inadequate, with a more thorough assessment needed.

The truck and rail load facility would operate 24-hours a day, but the noise analysis submitted by Inergy only analyzed daytime noise. Nighttime noise levels are needed, and brine pump, injection pump and compressor noise must be considered.

The sound analysis deals only with rail operations, not truck

noise.

A more thorough consideration of rail car delivery and loading activity is needed, especially for the proposed rail track north of the Route 14A overpass.

Also, the DEC said a residence south of Route 14A, immediately west of the existing railroad track, should be included in the sound analysis.

DEC officials said more details are needed on the system to be used to measure sound levels.

SITE PLAN: There was no electronic copy of the site operations plan, as required.

BRINE POND: Several questions were raised about the section on the proposed 14-acre brine pond a mile north of Watkins Glen.

The DEC called for a revised analysis of the concentration of sodium and chloride that would result from the release of more than 80 millions gallons of brine into the lake if the pond failed.

The new analysis should examine the mixing of the brine and the lake water, its impact on aquatic organisms and nearby lake water.

The company is also asked to examine the possibility of diverting the LPG to a flare when a

major drawdown of the brine pond was needed when the caverns are full of LPG.

The DEC also directed the company to consider two or more smaller and deeper ponds in different locations as an alternative to one large pond.

The role of physical barriers above the pond in relation to serious accidental release of the brine should also be studied.

FAULT ANALYSIS: The DEC said other ways of demonstrating the suitability of a cavern to store hydrocarbons should be included in the plan.

The report now says the best way to determine suitability is testing cavern pressure containment capability.

SONAR: A section on sonar reports or surveys must be updated with the most recent sonar reports to identify caverns or well deficiencies.

PUBLIC SAFETY: The company was asked to discuss the type of accidents that may be typical at this type of facility.

They include surface and subsurface blowouts, accidents involving truck and rail transportation of LPG and the capabilities of local first responders to manage those incidents.

The report is asked to detail the impact on existing railroad crossings from rail car loading and unloading.

ENGINEERING REPORT: The DEC asked the company to further examine liner stability for the brine pond in regard to groundwater inflow and the materials used in the liner.

Other liner issues to be studied further are the double liner and anchor trench design around the brine pond's perimeter, more details on the 5,000 gallon storage tank and all piping for handling collected leakage, how much leakage is acceptable, the closure of the brine pond, stormwater diversion system culverts, and the rationale for using PVC pipe in the leak detection layer of the double-lined impoundment area.

Also, the report needs to answer questions about the leak detection receiving tank and overall leak protection and detection system, the need for a double-walled leak detection piping for the east berm.

GROUNDWATER: The DEC said the groundwater monitoring program must be able to detect leaks from the brine pond and differentiate them from salt from

road deicing.

More details on the monitoring wells are also needed.

"The application remains incomplete pending the receipt of a complete underground LPG storage application and adoption of the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement by the department," said David Bimber, deputy regional permit administrator for the DEC.

Meanwhile, officials from Damiani Wine Cellars are urging all area businesses to join the effort to stop the LPG storage facility proposal.

They have planned information sessions from 7 p.m. today at the wine cellar at 4704 Route 414, Burdett, and 7 p.m. Wednesday at Glenora Wine Cellars in Dundee.

They are circulating a petition of opposition, citing the huge brine pond, possible leaking of the brine pond into Seneca Lake, possible explosions, noise pollution from the increased rail and truck traffic, light pollution and frequent gas flares, traffic concentration, damage to the area's natural beauty, promotion of hydrofracking, harm to tourism and few local jobs and profits.