

# Massapequa Water District

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Letters to the Editor  
Newsday  
235 Pinelawn Road  
Melville, NY 11747

May 12, 2010

Dear Sir / Madam:

Your recent article (May 4, 2010) entitled "*New alarms raised about dry-cleaning solvent in water*" incorrectly focuses on dry cleaners as the source of tetrachloroethylene (PCE) that is currently and has been contaminating our drinking water supply for decades. PCE is not only used for dry cleaning application but is also used as a solvent for metal cleaning and degreasing. Herein lies the problem as the major PCE contamination to our **Sole-Source Aquifer** has been from the metal cleaning and degreasing process and not completely from the dry cleaning process. The Massapequa Water District remains deeply concerned with the PCE component as well as all other contaminants emanating from the highly contaminated Grumman Bethpage site.

The Massapequa Water District continues to be concerned with the lack of remediation and the lack of cleanup enforcement regarding the Grumman Bethpage site. Over the past decade The District has placed the Nassau County Department of Health, New York State DEC and USEPA on notice that these highly contaminated plumes be remediated before they have the ability to impact our supply wells. As you have pointed out in your article the concerns regarding PCE as a potential drinking water health threat and being a carcinogenic is only one aspect of the complex contaminants emanating from the Grumman Bethpage site. The aforementioned plume consists of a number of volatile organic compounds, but is primarily composed of tetrachloroethene (PCE) and trichloroethene (TCE) in significant concentrations. *It is important to fully understand the difference between the contamination threats. For example the dry-cleaning contamination threat, is generally localized and usually remains in the upper glacial aquifer while the plume emanating from the Grumman Bethpage site is infused deep into the Magothy aquifer (some 500 feet deep) with a southward migration past Hempstead Turnpike.*

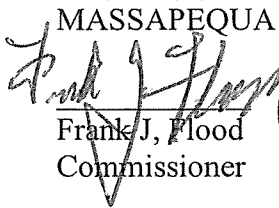
The Grumman Bethpage plume clean up has been basically ignored by the state (NYSDEC, NYS DOH) and federal (EPA) regulatory agencies. These agencies directly responsible to the people of the United States, continue to promote and enforce an unreliable wellhead treatment process as their answer to the complete Grumman plume clean-up. In essence the Regulatory Agencies are content with inviting the contaminants into the public water supply and then hopefully treating them at the supply wellhead. As the EPA develops more stringent drinking water standards, the wellhead treatment approach has proved unreliable and in need of treatment upgrades to meet the more stringent requirements. In essence as the plume contamination remains a constant over the past 25 years, and the EPA issues more stringent drinking water

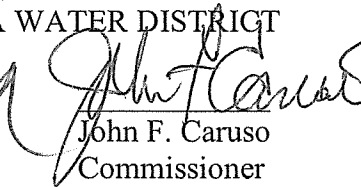
Standards, over the same period, the initial wellhead treatment process needs to be upgraded to meet the new standards. However, a site remediation and a plume cleanup are permanent and nonthreatening to the future water supply.

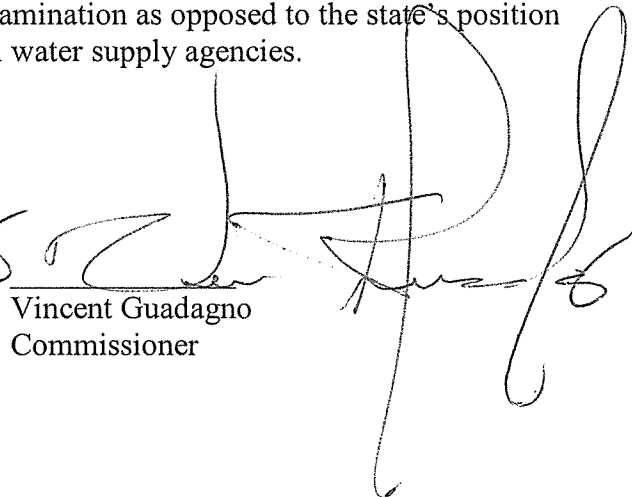
For the past decade the District has taken every step possible to have the site cleaned up even notifying our United States senators in an effort to have them intercede on our behalf with the EPA. With our decade long notifications to the United States senators and EPA officials, the plume has been allowed to continue to migrate, impact, and threaten to impact, numerous public drinking water supply wells. Therefore the District will continue to aggressively address this serious water quality issue and will only be satisfied once the threat of contamination is completely eliminated.

Perhaps with Newsday's assistance our United States senators will compel federal and state regulatory agencies to perform their regulatory duties that are specific to health issues, by remediating the groundwater contamination as opposed to the state's position of requiring well head treatment by the local water supply agencies.

Very truly yours,  
MASSAPEQUA WATER DISTRICT

  
Frank J. Flood  
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John F. Caruso  
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