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Congress of the United States
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August 19, 2024

The Honorable Michael Connor
Assistant Secretary
Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works)
United States Army
108 Army Pentagon
Washington, DC 20310

Mr. Jon Vander Ark
President
Republic Services, Inc.
18500 N Allied Way
Phoenix, AZ 85054

Dear Assistant Secretary Connor and Mr. Vander Ark:

I am writing to express deep concern regarding the impending transportation of toxic waste to the Wayne Disposal facility in Van Buren Township, Michigan, which is located in Michigan's Sixth Congressional District. It's critical we ensure that the health and safety of my constituents are fully protected.

We have learned that the Wayne Disposal facility is slated to receive radioactive waste from a site associated with the Manhattan Project, the initiative that developed atomic bombs during and after World War II.¹ Unfortunately, my office was not given prior notice and I, as well as numerous other public officials, learned of this news through a Detroit Free Press article. According to the news article, this waste includes 6,000 cubic yards of contaminated soil and concrete and 4,000 gallons of groundwater, all of which will be transported via public roads under the oversight of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

This decision has raised significant concerns among residents of Southeastern Michigan, particularly in light of previous controversies surrounding hazardous waste shipments to the area.

¹ Matheny, K. "Thousands of tons of radioactive waste from atom bomb-making heading to Wayne County." *The Detroit Free Press*. 19 Aug. 2024. Retrieved from:
<https://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/wayne/2024/08/19/radioactive-waste-atom-bomb-disposal-van-buren-township-wayne-county/74814545007/>

The lack of advance notice to local officials and the public has only heightened anxiety about the potential risks associated with transporting such materials through our communities.

While I understand this facility is licensed at both the federal- and state-level and must adhere to strict regulations that ensure the community is protected, my constituents remain concerned about the impact on their health and environment. Given the recent history of hazardous waste disposal incidents in Michigan, it is imperative that we be informed of all precautions being taken to protect our community.

I ask that you please provide insight and responses to the following questions by Monday, August 26, 2024:

- How was the decision made to transport this waste to the Wayne Disposal facility?
- Why were local officials and the public not notified in advance about the transportation of this waste?
- What specific measures are being implemented to ensure the safety of the community during the transportation and disposal of this waste?
- What steps are being taken to prevent any accidents during the transport and disposal of this waste?
- What response plans are in place in the event of an incident during the transportation or disposal of the waste?
- Will the waste be tested before being deposited?
- What ongoing environmental monitoring will be conducted to ensure there is no contamination or adverse impact on the surrounding environment, and how frequently will this data be reported to the public?
- Please provide detailed information on the protocols and technologies used at the Wayne Disposal facility to safely manage and contain this waste.
- What steps are being taken to ensure full compliance with all state and federal environmental regulations and engage with my constituents to address their concerns about the safety of this waste disposal?
- Will you participate in an in-person town hall in the community?

I look forward to your timely response. The communication with the community must be transparent, avoiding surprises and headlines in local media that cause anxiety.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Debbie Dingell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress