

There's a new threat in our region involving PFAS "forever chemicals," which are toxic at very small amounts (the state's drinking water standard is 10 parts per trillion). Scientists have determined there is no safe level of exposure to PFAS, which do not break down in water, soil or the human body. PFAS are linked to cancer, and a variety of other serious health effects, including fatty liver disease, reproductive problems, immune system effects, and endocrine disruption.

A company called ESMI/Clean Earth, which was recently acquired by the multi-billion-dollar French corporation Veolia, has applied for a DEC research permit to truck in and heat treat 5,000 tons of PFAS-contaminated soil in its pole barn facility in the village of Fort Edward near the Hudson River in a remediation experiment. If DEC allows this risky experiment to proceed, Clean Earth plans to turn Fort Edward into the hub for remediating PFAS-contaminated soil for the entire Northeast U.S.

The new Cumulative Impacts Law should prevent this project from getting permitted. Fort Edward is already an overburdened community, heavily impacted by PCBs from General Electric, which dumped 1.3 million pounds of PCBs into the Hudson River and gave away untold amounts mixed with oil to spray on dirt roads and vacant lots.

A new study by the Colorado School of Mines warns that "airborne byproducts of PFAS destruction" have the potential to be just as problematic as the "forever chemicals" from which they are derived. Clean Earth would try to destroy whatever PFAS it is able to remove from the soil in a thermal oxidizer, but experts question whether it would attain a hot enough temperature to destroy the extremely strong carbon-fluorine bond in PFAS.

This toxic experiment would threaten the health of Upper Hudson residents for decades to come. The Disadvantaged Communities (DAC) downwind of Fort Edward (Hudson Falls and portions of Glens Falls) would receive these toxic air emissions, according to the company's air modeling.

We support the remediation of PFAS-contaminated soil, but soil should be remediated at the contaminated site, rather than subjecting another community to contamination. Furthermore, we do not believe that Clean Earth has the capacity or track record to remediate PFAS-contaminated soil safely, without toxic releases into the environment.

A large outcry (in the form of written comments to DEC) can persuade DEC to deny this research permit. We have a goal of 500 comments. **Please submit a comment to DEC and ask 5 other people to submit comments.**

Go to ____ *(I will send a link on Sunday morning.)* _____ for guidance on what to say in your comment. Please ask DEC to deny the research, development and demonstration (RD&D) permit and ask for an in-person public hearing.

Send your comment to dec.sm.ESMI@dec.ny.gov

The comment period ends on February 17, 2026.

For more info or to help with this campaign, contact Tracy Frisch, Clean Air Action Network of Glens Falls (CAAN), 518-692-8242 landline or tracy.frisch@gmail.com or email thefortstopspfas@gmail.com