



Legislation Text

File #: 19-1887, **Version:** 1

Resolution Supporting the Environmental Protection Agency's Active Involvement with the Gelman Site and Encouraging its Listing of the same as a "Superfund" Site

The City and its residents have worked for decades to require Gelman to delineate and clean up City ground water contaminated by 1,4-dioxane that originated at the Gelman Sciences Wagner Road facility, and to protect City ground water from further spreading of the Contamination. As part of that effort, the City sued Gelman in state and federal court more than 10 years ago, before agreeing to settle the lawsuit. Separately, the State has for decades litigated against, and otherwise regulated, Gelman to enforce State environmental laws that apply to the Contamination. Those parties have operated under various versions of a consent judgment over the years.

Following the State's recent tightening of its standards for dioxane groundwater pollution, the City, with others, intervened in the State's ongoing lawsuit against Gelman pending in Washtenaw County Trial Court. Since its intervention was allowed in 2017, the City has engaged in settlement negotiations over a potential new consent judgment. Those negotiations aside, however, the City is simply not satisfied with the progress of the delineation, containment and remediation of the contamination. The City believes that delineation, containment and remediation will be bolstered by EPA's active involvement and enforcement of the Superfund law at this site. At this time, the EPA has a single employee assigned to closely monitor this situation and work with the State. Unless the EPA's involvement moves beyond the preliminary assessment that it's completed, that employee may be reassigned.

Prepared by: Councilmember Griswold

Whereas, The City and its residents have worked for decades to require Gelman to delineate, and clean up City ground water contaminated by 1,4-dioxane ("Dioxane") that originated at the Gelman Sciences ("Gelman") Wagner Road facility (the "Contamination"), and to protect City ground water from further spreading of the Contamination;

Whereas, As part of that work, The City sued Gelman in state and federal court more than 10 years ago, and ultimately agreed to settle that lawsuit;

Whereas, The State of Michigan ("State") has for decades separately litigated against, and otherwise regulated, Gelman to enforce State environmental laws that apply to the Contamination;

Whereas, Following the State's recent tightening of its standards for Dioxane groundwater pollution, as part of the City's continuing efforts, it, along with others, intervened in the State's ongoing lawsuit against Gelman pending in Washtenaw County Trial Court;

Whereas, Since its intervention was allowed in 2017, the City has engaged in settlement negotiations over a potential new consent judgment;

Whereas, Negotiations aside, the City is not satisfied with the progress of the delineation, containment and remediation of the Contamination; and

Whereas, The City believes that delineation, containment and remediation of the Contamination will be bolstered by the United States Environmental Protection Agency's ("EPA") active involvement and enforcement of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act ("CERCLA"), the "Superfund" Act, as it applies to the Contamination;

RESOLVED, That the City Council supports EPA's active involvement, as the lead agency, and enforcement of CERCLA, the "Superfund" Act, as it applies to the Contamination;

RESOLVED, That the City Council encourages the EPA to list the site of the Contamination a "Superfund" site on the National Priorities List under CERCLA;

RESOLVED, That the City Council direct the City Administrator to write to the Governor enclosing this resolution and soliciting a Concurrence Letter to USEPA in support of making the Gelman Site into a National Priorities List site;

RESOLVED, That the City Council direct the City Administrator to send this resolution and any such State concurrence to the Washtenaw County delegation to the Michigan Legislature, the Director of the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy, and Congresswoman Debbie Dingell; and

RESOLVED, That the City Council authorize the City Administrator to take such further actions that are consistent with the purposes of this resolution.

Sponsored by: Councilmembers Griswold, Hayner, Bannister, Eaton and Ramlawi