

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 16, 2015

Contact: Joseph Campbell, [607-769-4639](tel:607-769-4639), muchado2@gmail.com

Finger Lakes Wineries, Businesses, Municipalities, Organizations File for Upcoming Issues Conference in Opposition to Gas Storage (LPG) Facility that Threatens Finger Lakes Region

Hundreds of Businesses, More than a Dozen Municipalities, Organizations and Thousands of Residents Unite to Protect the Finger Lakes and Drinking Water for 100,000 People

Rochester and Syracuse- A broad and diverse coalition consisting of four entities announced filings for Party Status and Amicus Briefs as part of the Department of Environmental Conservation's (DEC) Issues Conference on a proposed Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) storage project on the day of the filing deadline (1/16). The Issues conference is slated for February 12th in Horseheads, New York. The four groups are:

- Seneca Lake Pure Waters Association (SLPWA) (see <http://senecalake.org/>)
- Municipality Leaders throughout the Finger Lakes Region (see: http://gasfreeseneca.com/?page_id=493)
- Finger Lakes Wine Business Coalition, consisting of more than 100 wineries and related businesses (FLXWBC) (see <http://flxwbc.com/>)
- Gas Free Seneca, a grassroots coalition of thousands of residents and more than 260 local businesses (see www.gasfreeseneca.com)

All Parties are seeking denial of the DEC's permit to Texas-based Crestwood Midstream for its proposed Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) facility, citing reasons why it's imperative for the economy, health, and environment of the region that no permit be issued. Parties announced their Petition to participate in an Adjudicatory Hearing, seeking Full Party Status or filing an Amicus Brief (friend of the court).

This represents a united, strong, and broad regional opposition to Texas-based Crestwood's plan to turn unlined salt mines along Seneca Lake, two miles north of Watkins Glen, into a major propane and butane storage/ transport hub for the Northeastern United States. Groups are filing together to send a message to Governor Cuomo about the threat that the facility poses to the Finger Lakes, and to participate in the legal proceedings. The groups held press conferences today in Rochester and Syracuse because this is an issue that affects the entire Finger Lakes region.

Dr. Joseph Campbell, President and co-founder of Gas Free Seneca, representing over 260 Finger Lakes businesses, municipalities throughout the region, and thousands of Finger Lakes residents, said, “We are filing together to send a message to Governor Cuomo, and to participate in the legal proceedings to demonstrate that the heavy industrialization is not only incompatible with the existing wine and tourism industries, but that it is scientifically irresponsible to store gas along a drinking water source for 100,000 people.”

11 of the 16 municipalities with resolutions opposing the facility have joined together for Party Status in the February Hearing. Dr. Jacqueline Augustine, a City of Geneva Councilor, said, “Geneva has worked tirelessly over the past 25 years to avoid the fate of our rust-belt neighbors in a post-industrial economy. We have done that through intentional, focused investment in recreational tourism, environmental stewardship, and sensible economic development. The expansion of gas storage along our shores not only threatens the water supply for Finger Lakes residents, but it threatens the economic health of a region that has a burgeoning international brand to protect.... By filing for party status, we are asking Governor Cuomo’s DEC to take note of these concerns and act responsibly in denying a permit for the proposed activities.”

Ken Camera, Geneva City council member, stated, "A catastrophic accident at the U.S. Salt site, related to the storage of Liquid Propane Gas, has the potential to impact nearly every sector of our economy and our day-to-day lives. The region’s tax and employment bases, major industry and the service sector that supports it, and most importantly our children and families will be drastically impacted—in a likely irreversible way within our lifetimes. Scientists have already documented the steady deterioration of Seneca Lake over the last 20 years. We cannot afford to risk the Finger Lakes’ future for a project of limited local benefits."

The Finger Lakes Wine Business Coalition (FLXWBC) is a newly formed group consisting of over one hundred wineries, vineyard owners, and wine related businesses. William Ouweleen, FLXWBC Board member and Brand Manager of O-Neh-Da and Eagle Crest Vineyards, Hemlock Lake, NY stated, “Finger Lakes Wine Country has come a long way in the last decade, and today it is anachronistic to locate the ‘Fracked Gas storage Hub of the Northeast,’ in the heart of Finger Lakes Wine Country. No one would suggest this in the heart of wine country in Italy, New Zealand or France.”

Justin Boyette, co-owner of Hector Wine company and partner in Forge Cellars along with French Vigneron Louis Barroul of Chateau St. Cosme in Gigondas, France said, “Just as some of the most respected winemakers in the world begin projects on Seneca Lake, and Wine Enthusiast Magazine names the Finger Lakes one of the Top 10 Best Wine Travel Destinations in the World for 2015, NYS is facing a decision about allowing 88 million gallons of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) to be stored in and transported out of Watkins Glen. This is an industry that cannot coexist with the already existing and growing 4.8 billion dollar NYS wine industry. Which is the better investment for the future of the Finger Lakes and NYS?”

Mr. Boyette read statements from both Forge Cellars and Paul Hobbs (California & Argentina) and Johannes Selbach, (Germany), who had also invested in vineyard land directly across the lake from the proposed gas storage facility on Seneca Lake, before they learned of Crestwood’s proposal.

Seneca Lake Pure Waters Association Board Member Ed Przybylowicz said, “Perhaps the biggest challenge to the quality of Seneca Lake during our association’s 30-year history is the proposal to store liquefied petroleum gas under pressure in abandoned salt mines on the shores of the Lake. The creation of a major industrial storage and distribution center for hazardous natural and liquefied petroleum gases represents poor judgment and irresponsible

planning. Protection of Seneca Lake should be the FIRST priority of Governor Cuomo's Department of Environmental Conservation in reviewing this application, not an afterthought."

The Finger Lakes region has positioned itself as an economically sustainable, world-class tourist destination with a vision for continued development that does not include a very dangerous, dirty industry. The cities of Rochester and Syracuse depend on the draw of the Finger Lakes as they attract the kind of professionals who care about the bucolic beauty that the Finger Lakes possesses, and that has not been sacrificed for massive industrialization by the Oil and Gas Industry.

All Parties will present supporting materials and legal issues at the Issues Conference, where an Adjudicatory Law Judge will determine whether a full Adjudicatory Hearing is warranted, and if so, who will be given Party Status at the hearing.

The Municipalities have obtained pro bono legal representation from the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), Gas Free Seneca has representation from Earthjustice, The FLXWBC and SLPWA have also retained legal counsel. Expert witnesses have been obtained and will present their arguments at the Issues Conference slated for February 12th in Horseheads, New York.

Background:

The New York Times [recently featured](#) the wineries' fight to stop gas storage expansion on Seneca Lake, noting their decades long goal and great success in transforming the region into "a mecca for world-class wines, and invite an influx of thirsty oenotourists."

See Gas Free Seneca's website for additional information about the threats that expanded gas storage poses to the region and history of the issue: <http://gasfreeseneca.com/>