

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20510

September 15, 2020

Attorney Tim Conway  
United States Environmental Protection Agency, Region 1  
5 Post Office Square  
Suite 100  
Boston, Massachusetts 02109-3912

Dear Mr. Conway:

We urge you to re-open and extend the open formal public comment period on the Draft Revised 2020 Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) Permit to Friday, November 20, 2020.

This RCRA Permit extends from two miles south of the General Electric plant in Massachusetts to the Derby Dam in Connecticut, covering a broad watershed area. Given that action under the permit could be so impactful, it is important for the public to be afforded sufficient opportunity to review, understand, and formulate effective comments to the EPA during the permit process.

On July 23, 2020, The Housatonic Environmental Action League, Inc. (HEAL) and the Housatonic River Initiative, Inc. (HRI) contacted you to request the same extension. Since then you authorized one additional virtual formal public hearing for oral testimony, and a two week extension for the formal public written comment period to September 18, 2020. Though appreciated, these efforts are insufficient given the extent of this Permit, and do little to ease restrictions on the ability of citizen stakeholders to effectively engage in the EPA's permitting process for this area.

The EPA's expectation for citizen stakeholders to read and understand countless pages of complex documents and then attempt to write meaningful comments, all in the span of just over two months, is unreasonable. Moreover, stakeholders are in the midst of an ongoing pandemic that has resulted in mass mortality, an unemployment crisis, and a digital divide. Many stakeholders live in the area which has been subjected to several significant storms resulting in substantial damage and power outages for up to a week.

In addition to the above, notice of the opportunity to provide comments have been particularly limited for Connecticut constituents. In Massachusetts, there has been a Permit-related press conference and press releases, a legal notice in local news, post card mailing, and a radio interview of an EPA official. Connecticut has not received any of those notifications, and neither state has had the opportunity to ask questions directly to EPA at any agency-sponsored informal public information session.

EPA must continue to uphold its long standing commitment to robust public participation in RCRA permitting actions by extending the open formal public comment period on the Draft Revised 2020 RCRA Permit to Friday, November 20, 2020. We appreciate your consideration of this request so that all stakeholders, especially Connecticut constituents, have adequate opportunity to thoroughly review and constructively respond to any proposed RCRA Permit actions.

Sincerely,

/s/ Richard Blumenthal  
RICHARD BLUMENTHAL  
United States Senate

/s/ Christopher S. Murphy  
CHRISTOPHER S. MURPHY  
United States Senate

/s/ Jahana Hayes  
JAHANA HAYES  
Member of Congress