

Residents pack Gladwin injection well hearing

Now they have to pack the EPA with substantive written comments

Public Comment Deadline is June 22, 2018 (midnight postmark).

How to comment:

Send comments by email to Janette Hansen at EPA, Hansen.janette@epa.gov, or by mail postmarked not later than midnight June 22, 2018 to: Janette Hansen, U.S. EPA, Water Division, UIC Branch (WU-16J), 77 Jackson Blvd, Chicago, IL 60604-3590. Put "Grove #13-11 well, draft permit number MI-051-2D-0031 in the subject line.



Over 200 people packed a public hearing and meeting held by the US Environmental Protection Agency in Gladwin on June 19 at Gladwin High School to find out about and give public comment on a proposed injection well for Sage Township. The injection well permit sought by Jordan Development LLC would convert an existing gas well into a disposal well that would service two nearby oil and gas wells by a pipeline, and allow the company to dispose of 20,000 barrels of oil and gas wastes daily, indefinitely.

Attendees were frustrated to learn that a proposed pipeline to carry the toxic waste (repeatedly called "water" by the Jordan Development representative) from the wells to the injection well, while just 3 feet underground, was not a part of the EPA's authority, and could not be part of the EPA decision. Residents continually pointed out how little information was really revealed by the draft permit or the EPA spokespeople. When asked what chemicals were in the benign-sounding "brine," EPA's Janette Hansen replied "It'll be a long list." The "area of review" for an injection well is only 1/4 mile, while residents clearly were concerned about impacts beyond that short distance.

Numerous residents from Gladwin County and neighboring counties got up to the mic to ask questions during the public meeting, and to make statements during the hearing. Teachers, scientists, doctors and other residents were of one mind and against the permitting of the well, citing potential health risks, water contamination, interference with old abandoned wells in the area, and the seepage of the waste in the permeable underground formations that might find its way far from Gladwin county. A long time resident brought in some of his well water and poured some glasses for the EPA staffers to see. His water became salty 22 years ago and he still doesn't drink it. "Think about the children," he said, and warned the staffers to not drink it.

One young woman resident, bald and wearing a breathing mask, after telling her story of being in stage 4 cancer after having breathed the vapors in the area, warned residents of the harmful air toxins that would come from oil and gas waste. She received a standing ovation.

One resident prefaced his comments by saying he was born and raised on the Cedar River and got his masters degree in fisheries and wildlife. As a scientist, he said he was concerned about the well failure rates and pointed out the hundreds of leaks nationwide. Letha Raymond from Clare County voiced her concerns about the health and safety of area residents and the effects of injecting oil and gas wastes in an injection well with so many old oil and gas wells in the area that are not capped. Amy Kruske pointed out that a letter to the editor and residents' requests for a hearing was what alerted residents to the proposed injection well and led to the hearing.

Ellis Boal and LuAnne Kozma, representing Ban Michigan Fracking, attended and gave comments regarding seismicity and well casing failure. Residents are urged to submit public comments concerning the process, geologic siting, well engineering, and operation and monitoring standards. Kozma noted that the EPA was asked the question a year ago at a similar public hearing for an injection well in Barry County: "What is Michigan's well casing failure rate?" and the EPA said it did not know. At this meeting in Gladwin, a resident asked the same thing and the answer was the same: They do not know.

Kozma requested a new public hearing and urged residents to do the same.

Kozma, Boal, and other [Committee to Ban Fracking in Michigan](#) volunteers were there with [information sheets](#) about fracking and frack wastes, and collected over 210 signatures on the statewide ballot initiative petition that night.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROPOSED INJECTION WELL: The fact sheet and draft permit are available on the EPA website [here](#).