June 26, 2020

Dr. Daniel Fishbein, Superintendent of Schools
Education Center
49 Cottage Place
Ridgewood, NJ 07450

Re: Petition for Additional Public Outreach
Ridgewood Ash Landfill
Demarest Street
Ridgewood, NJ 07450
Pl # G000008572

Dear Mr. Fishbein:

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (Department) has received a petition signed by approximately 85 individuals requesting that additional public outreach be conducted related to the Ridgewood Ash Landfill. The petitioners requested that the Ridgewood Board of Education (BOE) conduct additional public outreach based on the needs expressed by the community.

Pursuant to the Administrative Requirements for the Remediation of Contaminated Sites (N.J.A.C. 7:26C-1.7(o)), the person responsible for conducting the remediation is required to conduct additional public outreach if the Department determines that there is substantial public interest in remediation activities concerning a contaminated site. The Department may determine that there is substantial public interest when it receives a petition containing the signatures of 25 or more people who live or work within 200 feet of the extent of contamination or the property boundary. In accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:26C-1.7(o), the person responsible for conducting the remediation shall develop and implement additional public outreach based on the expressed needs of the community.

In this instance the petitioners are requesting outreach to address the following needs:

- Properly notify occupants of the school and users of the property of the nature and extent of contamination.
- Give the community the opportunity to review and comment on proposed remedial actions.

New Jersey is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Printed on Recycled Paper and Recyclable.
• Establish a publicly available document repository.

Significant Findings:

• The Ridgewood Public Schools/BOE maintains an extensive and up to date repository easily accessible on the school’s web page. The repository contains major historical documents, copies of letters and other communications, and periodic updates on the status of activities.

• The Ridgewood Public Schools/BOE has sent out several letters and updates to the entire school community. These letters were generally sent through the school’s email blast system to all parents.

• The Ridgewood Public Schools/BOE held a public meeting in January 2020. At the public meeting the site’s Licensed Site Remediation Professional (LSRP) presented information on the remedial plans. An opportunity for Q&A followed.

• As a follow up to requests that were made at the January public meeting, the grass areas at the school were fenced and signs were posted.

Based on the petition received, the Department has determined that there is substantial public interest in the above-referenced site and pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:26C-1.7(o) requires you as the person responsible for conducting the remediation to continue to take steps, such as you currently have been, to properly notify and provide information requested by the petitioners and others.

While the community is interested in the opportunity to review and comment on proposed remedial actions, the Department does not feel that mandating that opportunity prior to their submittal is feasible. However, there may be an opportunity for the Ridgewood Public Schools/BOE to form a small working group, allowing select members of the community to review and discuss proposals at an earlier stage.

As the work is currently being bid and expected to begin shortly, future efforts should ensure that communication is made with those residents near the site that will be affected by the site work and impacted by the increased truck traffic. Additionally, as the success of this chosen capping remedy depends on ongoing vigilance over time through inspections and maintenance, there is a need for efforts to continue to keep people apprised of the conditions in the future.

We will be posting a summary of this determination on the Department’s website.
If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at Stuart.Friedman@dep.nj.gov.

Sincerely,

Stuart Friedman, Acting Section Chief
Office of Community Relations
Bureau of Case Assignment and Initial Notice

cc:
Ms. Jennie Smith Wilson, Board President, jswilson@ridgewood.k12.nj.us
Joshua Ford, 45 N Broad St., Suite 504, Ridgewood, NJ 07450, ford@ford-legal.com
David Terry, LSRP, david.terry@wsp.com
Erica Snyder, NJDEP Bureau of Environmental Evaluation & Risk Assessment
Mark Herzberg, NJDEP Office of Community Relations