

## **Letter to the Editor**

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### **Landfill opponents hardly 'lunatics'**

It was encouraging to read the statements made by Canton Mayor Richard Watkins and U.S. Rep. Ralph Regula at the recent hearing regarding a proposed landfill that would be six miles from the city's wells. Watkins voiced his concern, even if it meant a "1 percent problem... a smidgen of a chance" that the landfill could damage the water supply. "The lives of too many people are at stake," he said, and vowed to "fight the landfill as long as I can." Similarly, the congressman cited "water quality and quantity" as "the biggest environmental issue we face in the 21st century."

Their expressed sentiments are identical to the beliefs held by my group, Concerned Citizens of Lake Township, in our fight for a true cleanup of the Industrial Excess Landfill near Uniontown, which contains hundreds of thousands of tons of toxins perched just a few feet above the water table. While no one would dare to call the mayor and congressman "extremists terrorizing the community" or "fringe lunatics" for their stance, these words were used to attack CCLT in comments recently submitted to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency by supporters of Lake Township Trustee Sue Ruley. It's a sad day in this country when housewives and businessmen are likened to terrorists, because we want a permanent cleanup to protect public health.

Even more outrageous, in what appeared to be a possible attempt to thwart the ombudsman investigation the IEL, Ruley used her position as trustee to send a letter in July to numerous key members of Congress, attempting to discredit CCLT and the validity of a report written by the Washington watchdog group Project on Government Oversight. The POGO report was submitted at a Senate hearing in June, held to discuss the urgent need for an ombudsman bill and the reinstatement of Bob Martin so that he can finish his probe at the Uniontown dump and other sites. The report used the IEL radiation controversy as an example of how EPA fails to do its job.

Because the community has shown widespread support for ombudsman Martin, the public has the right to know that Ruley is not listening to what the people said they wanted at a formal hearing, in glaring contrast to the responsiveness of Watkins and Regula.

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