



**Email to Barry Leemann, Chair, Oswego County Board of Legislators**

**7/16/2009**

Mr. Chairman,

We are aware that you have been quoted in various newspaper articles indicating that there are a lot of questions that need to be answered with regard to Bion's proposed project. We believe that we have fairly presented the project and answered the questions that have been asked while you and other members of the legislature state publicly that we have failed to answer questions and have failed to adequately explain the project.

Rather than debate that point, we would like to ask for your assistance on how this project needs to be communicated to the community and its leadership so that community leaders can answer the threshold question which is whether this project is suitable for Oswego County.

With guidance from Michael Treadwell, we have provided private presentations with question and answer opportunities to a number of Oswego County officials involved with economic development as well as public meetings with area producers and most recently with the Legislature's Economic Development Committee. We have answered every question posed to us at these meetings as fully as the current status of project development will support.

As a result of those meetings, we have received **no** follow up questions with the exception of two calls from the press looking for our response to published comments from public officials.

The jobs associated with our project are real jobs with real benefits consistent with the skills of the regional workforce and many who are currently unemployed. These are not agricultural, migrant or otherwise part time jobs as has been speculated by some. The economic benefits to the region will be significant.

Questions seem to revolve around a perception of the environmental compatibility of the project in the community, i.e. its suitability for the region. The problem of perception is not so much that there is little experience in the region with large scale agriculture –that in itself leads to a fear of the perceived risks and that is why we distributed the link to the Fair Oaks Dairy video.

The real obstacle lies in the difficulty in reaching a level of comfort with the performance of Bion's proven waste treatment technology that enables the economic benefits associated with the proposed project. Bion has proposed that a conditional endorsement of the project be subject to a number of requirements including but not limited to our ability to demonstrate actual performance of the technology as exhibited at the Bion dairy project to be built shortly at a commercial dairy in Lancaster, PA. Rejecting the project without a legitimate attempt to find that comfort with regard to the technology and the conditions of endorsement however would seem to be a disservice to a community that needs the economic stimulus.

**Bion's question is: assuming that the project can demonstrate that it meets the standards and descriptions as represented and can successfully pass all future reviews including a detailed public environmental process, is it suitable for the community?**

This is the type of community insight commonly sought by large-scale projects during their early stages of development. We are also reaching out to the County's Environmental Management Council as one possible venue for vetting such an approach and would like to engage you in the determination of a constructive process that can lead to an informed decision on the part of the community as to whether it can conditionally endorse the proposed project with conditions as suggested.