

Established 1903

# PORT WASHINGTON news

VOL. 110, No. 26

WWW.PORTWASHINGTON-NEWS.COM

MARCH 4 - 10, 2015

\$1.25

## Bosworth Calls On EPA To Ban 'Penta'

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Town of North Hempstead Supervisor Judi Bosworth is calling on the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to halt the use of Pentachlorophenol, or Penta, a chemical used by public utilities to preserve electrical and telephone poles.

The move comes as the town is being sued by PSEG LI over the town's requiring the utility to place warning signs on Penta-treated poles.

The EPA has already deemed Penta a "probable" human carcinogen, but the agency still allows its use. Bosworth said she has been given indications from the EPA that it is reviewing her letter and it

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Utility poles treated with Penta run from Port Washington to Great Neck.



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had already been re-evaluating Pentachlorophenol.

"I and many of the town's residents are extremely concerned by the continued use of Penta as a treatment for utility poles," Bosworth said in her letter. "The continued use of Penta on utility poles has the potential to affect the groundwater quality of millions of Long Island residents... Given that the majority of other uses of the product have been prohibited since 1984, I request that you take the final step to eliminate this threat to our communities and our environment and immediately move to ban the chemical, as other national governments have done."

Bosworth is not alone. Residents for a More Beautiful Port Washington has also called for Penta's ban.

Penta's commercial uses includes utility poles, fences, shingles, walkways, building components, piers, docks, porches, flooring and laminated beams.

In September, 2014, the town board unanimously passed a resolution requiring PSEG LI to install signs on all utility poles put in after Jan. 31, 2015 that reads: "Notice: This pole contains Pentachlorophenol. Avoid prolonged contact with this pole. Wash hands or affected areas thoroughly if contact is made."

PSEG had installed scores of utility poles treated with Penta in a project spanning from Port Washington to Great Neck. The 80- to 85-foot poles replaced 40-foot poles, and their size caused a rift, with the town and residents on one side and PSEG LI on the other.

Failure to comply with the town law results in a \$500 fine for the first offense, and a \$1,000 fine for continued offenses. Each pole counts as a violation for each day the pole is not given the proper signage. PSEG followed up by suing the town last month, saying the governmental body was acting beyond its scope. The town has responded to the suit and said it was within its rights.

In her letter, Bosworth notes that Long Island resides on top of a sole source aquifer system, which provides all of the Town of North Hempstead's



**Town of North Hempstead Supervisor Judy Bosworth is calling on federal authorities to ban "Penta."**

drinking and utility water. Penta may leach into the aquifer system, leading to increased costs for residents, along with health risks associated with Penta, she said. Further, Penta damages aquatic ecosystems and can be ingested by marine life, which may later be subject to human consumption, Bosworth wrote.

In the letter, Bosworth states, "Pentachlorophenol has long been recognized as a public health threat. Given that, the majority of other uses of the product have been prohibited since 1984, I request that you [the EPA] take the final step to eliminate this threat to our communities and our environment, and immediately move to ban the chemical as other national governments have done. Our utilities should be encouraged to use the safest material for their distribution systems."

Residents for a More Beautiful Port Washington joined with Bosworth in calling to a ban of Pentachlorophenol.

"We are extremely concerned with the degree our citizenry is exposed to this toxic chemical, which the EPA has declared extremely toxic to humans from acute ingestion and inhalation exposure," said Curt Trinko, chairman of Residents. "Utility poles that line streets where we live, learn and work are treated with Penta. As advocates for a walkable and vibrant downtown, these toxic poles abutting sidewalks, schools, parks, shops and restaurants run contrary to our vision."

"The question isn't should we ban it, the question is why would we allow this toxic to continue to be used," said Adrienne Esposito, executive director of Citizens Campaign for the Environment. "What's more important, preserving wood or preventing cancer? Safer alternatives should be found. We need our utility companies to be partners in protecting our waters, not polluters of our waters."