

## Fusaro, Carolyn

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**From:** Charlene Brauns-Schindler [cbsfive@yahoo.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 28, 2013 3:36 PM  
**To:** Fusaro, Carolyn; Gonyea, Donald  
**Cc:** john.mckinney@cga.gov; Brenda.kupchick@cga.ct.gov; kim.fawcett@ct.gov; thwang@optonline.net; FirstSelectmanFfd@town.fairfield.ct.us; Kkiley@town.fairfield.ct.us; cmcarthyvahey@town.ct.us; tsteinke@town.fairfield.ct.us  
**Subject:** Proposed Exide SedRAP for Mill River and Southport Harbor, Fairfield, CT  
**Attachments:** Exide letter 2.28.13-1.doc

To: Carolyn Fusaro and Donald Gonyea

From: Mill River Wetland Committee, Inc.

Attached is our letter pertaining to the Exide remediation proposal. Thank you for taking the time to read our concerns. I have also copied government officials connected to the town of Fairfield.

Charlene Brauns-Schindler  
President, MRWC

February 28, 2013

Dear Sir/Madam,

Concerning: Proposed Exide SedRAP for Mill River and Southport Harbor, Fairfield, CT

We, the Board of the Mill River Wetland Committee, Inc (MRWC), a non-for-profit 503(c) corporation providing environmental education to Fairfield students in grades 3-6, would like to express our concerns with the proposed SedRAP of the Mill River and Southport Harbor by Exide which is currently under consideration before DEEP. We applaud Exide for their diligence in plans to reinstate a healthy river. However, we are concerned with the proposed hydraulic design as the method of dredging, the lack of plans for the refilling of the excavated holes with clean fill to restore the stream bottom community, dredging during spawning season, and the incomplete testing of a pipe running along the railroad tracks.

The same type of hydraulic dredging system was used in 1983 unsuccessfully. According to reports, additional dredging was necessary because lead and other toxic particles were re-suspended in the water and escaped through and over the proposed "silt curtain". We do not want to see this degree of re-suspension to happen again, necessitating further dredging. We urge DEEP to consider the coffer dam system. The coffer dam system totally seals off the dredging site resulting in a lesser chance of contaminating the water through re-suspension. This system would also make it easier to refill the dredged areas with clean fill to restore the bottom of the river to allow for the stream bottom community of organisms to repopulate. The coffer dam system would also allow the project to proceed continuously. The coffer dam system would also have minimal impact on the spawning species.

We prefer that no dredging take place during spawning season, to allow those organisms to repopulate their species. We are particularly concerned about the alewives, whose population is declining. Alewives are one of the organisms 5<sup>th</sup> graders study during their spring River-Lab unit and students always look forward to observing them during their study-trips to the Mill River.

We also understand that there is a pipe that runs along the railroad tracks from the old Exide factory site to the river that has not been fully tested for contaminants. There needs to be a thorough investigation of this pipe and necessary removal of it carried out before any remediation of the river bottom takes place. This job would be less costly to complete now to prevent any recontamination from this source versus having to dredge again at a later date.

The goal of our environmental education program, River-Lab, through the study of river basin systems, is to instill in students the need to be good stewards of our environment. They learn that whatever we do to one part of a river basin system will affect other parts of the river basin system. In this case, a good steward would make sure that the best method to dredge was used to minimize the re-suspension of contaminants. The steward would not leave the stream bottom with gaping holes making it harder, if not impossible, for the complete balance in the natural restoration of life. Whatever is done in this particular portion of the Mill River will affect upstream because of the tidal action, downstream because of the natural river flow to the estuary, and the Long Island Sound. We hope DEEP and Exide will step up to the challenge and finalize a plan that will make them the best stewards of our Mill River Basin System.

Sincerely,

Charlene Brauns-Schindler  
President, MRWC, Inc.