

My name is Anne Mattice-Strauch. I am a Blenheim Town Council member, member of the Blenheim Hose Company, which is Blenheim's volunteer fire department, farmer and mother to 4 little boys. I am not eloquent, but I am blunt. Here we are at the start of the relicensing for the Blenheim Gilboa Power Project, and unfortunately it is safe to say that the Town of Blenheim would have been better off if the plant had never been built. The negative socio economic impacts of the Town of Blenheim have been huge. Overall there is no benefit the host communities have received from the NYPA occupying our land tax free that has not been completely out weighted by dangers and the loss of 2893 acres of our tax base (between the towns of Gilboa and Blenheim) with no financial compensation whatsoever.

The Power Authority poses a threat to life and property. Adequate notification of an emergency is a requirement of the NYPA's operating license. I believe that the NYPA is in violation of their operating license in this regard. It is their responsibility to ensure an adequate plan is in place. The NYPA chooses to deal with Schoharie County Emergency Management Office which has acknowledged that there is no adequate plan in place. As things stand right now there is no adequate way to warn the residents of the hamlet of North Blenheim of a dam breach. The siren system the county put in place is an outdoor warning system and the reverse 911 system doesn't reach 100% of the people in harms way.

During Hurricane Irene there was a malfunction and the NYPA was not able to open the gates to release water when they wanted to. By the time they were able to resolve the problem, the water level was a such they were in fear of a dam breach. Instead of opening the gates slowly so that the water level would come up gradually, they had to open them much more quickly to relieve the pressure on the dam. This caused a surge of water down through the valley. One of our fire department and Town Board members was almost caught in this sudden surge of water and his truck came close to being washed away with him and his wife in it. The sudden surge is also what my husband believes, destroyed the Blenheim Covered Bridge. Instead of the water rising and coming up around the bridge slowly it came all at once and pushed the bridge off of it's pylons. The timing of the surge and the bridge being destroyed coincides with the opening of the Power Authority's gates.

I have grown up in a community in the shadows of this multi-million dollar facility. While the Town and the people struggle to scrape by the Power Authority squanders their money on things such as fireworks for their anniversary celebration. How much did they spend on those? Ten thousand? Twenty-five thousand dollars? Just think what the Town of Blenheim could have done with that money. We could have put it towards a new highway truck. Started a fund to save up to build a new highway garage. This is just one example of how the Power Authority flaunts and wastes their money, while the Town of Blenheim receives nothing for the Power Authority taking our tax base.

We have not received any tax revenue for that land for almost 50 years. The plant and all the land the NYPA took, sits there tax free. Meanwhile Blenheim can't even afford to send our children to participate with the schools in the Mine Kill swim program. I am

sending my children to a different town where they will be provided breakfast, lunch, swimming and tennis lessons all for \$30 for the entire month. In order for my children to get swimming lessons through Mine Kill I have to take them after 3pm or we would have to pay to park and every time I go into the pool, it is \$4-\$6 in pool fees. I am sure the Power Authority will tell you that one can park for free and the lessons are free, but only if you pay the pool fees and adhere to their time table.

I am sure the Power Authority is going to tell you how many jobs they provide. The Power Authority does not provide jobs for the people of Blenheim. To my knowledge not one person from Blenheim works at the Power Authority. One person works at Lansing Manor and 1 at Mine Kill state park. Also do not let the Power Authority tell you no one is qualified from Blenheim to work there because that is not true. I know this for a fact.

The Power Authority gave the Town a highway truck to use. We have put so much money into fixing that truck over the years that the Blenheim Highway Superintendent told me that after we put a new motor in it (which it currently needs) we will have replaced everything on the truck. Meanwhile our repair line for the 1 entire budget year in Blenheim is \$22,000. The town is now getting ready to spend another \$14,000 on this truck because we can't afford to buy something that does not break down. Our Town Highway garage is an uninsulated shed type building provided by the Power Authority because the roof collapsed on our previous Town barn. This shed provided by the Power Authority was supposed to be temporary until the Town could afford to build another one, which we have never been able to.

My father was a charter member of the Blenheim Hose Company always wanted us to play nice with the Power Authority because they were handing out \$1000 a year to the fire department. He was so excited when they raised it to \$2000 a year. Multimillion dollar facility gives the first responders \$1000 a year. In their defense it did get up to \$4000 a year until it was cut out completely.

The Power Authority has refused to share any studies they have done. Since they refuse to share any information with the Town or County. We need you, FERC to require it. We need an environmental impact statement. Not just an environmental assessment. A social economic study. FERC needs to take a hard look at all the ways the NYPA has impacted its host communities, particularly, Blenheim. The NYPA is not a good neighbor and as a Town Board Member of the Town of Blenheim, I recommend that you do not renew their license and order that the Power project and the dams be dismantled so that the land can go back on the tax rolls and the dam will no longer pose a threat to the Town of Blenheim and other communities down stream.

Anne Mattice-Strauch
Blenheim Town Council Member

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