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Cabot Residents Groundwater at "High Risk" of Water Contamination

Cabot – Last night, at a public hearing hosted by the Agency of Natural Resources, Cabot Creamery's neighbors presented evidence that their groundwater is at "high risk" of contamination from Agrimark's on-site chemical, sewage, and fuel storage. Additionally, neighbors asked the ANR to investigate whether Agrimark's water consumption, of at least 30 million gallons of water per year, is draining their aquifer. Cabot residents were joined by environmental watchdog, Toxics Action Center of Montpelier, in calling for action.

"I have been highly concerned for a long time that Agrimark has been polluting my groundwater. The environmental assessment that the ANR handed over to me validates my concern," said Jill Alexander, head of a local Cabot community organization Whey to Go. "I would like some assurance that the ANR is going to monitor these contamination threats and not leave it up to Agrimark to self-report."

Agrimark is currently applying for water supply permits for three drinking water wells on their Cabot property. As part of the application, Agrimark has identified potential sources of pollution to the local groundwater. Several of these sources are considered "high risks" including stores of petroleum and chemicals on Agrimark's property. The source protection area, showing the area that shares Agrimark's water source, includes nearby properties, eliciting concern from neighbors.

Peg Mead, another neighbor to the Creamery, testified that her water wells are drying up. "In the past few years I have noticed a dramatic reduction in our private water supply. Now that I know about Agrimark's water use - now that they're applying for permits - I wonder if it's affecting my well."

"This is not your small dairy farmer watering the cattle," added Shane Zisman, legal aid at the Toxics Action Center, an environmental and public health nonprofit. "It is a fairly large business drawing 30 million gallons of water per year from their wells, and storing hazardous chemicals on-site. The only way to know if the Creamery is polluting the groundwater is to test."