

COUNTY OF SUFFOLK



STEVEN BELLONE
SUFFOLK COUNTY EXECUTIVE

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES

JAMES L. TOMARKEN, MD, MPH, MBA, MSW
Commissioner

November 3, 2016

Re: Sweet Hills Riding Center

Dear Resident:

The Suffolk County Department of Health Services (SCDHS) has prepared this letter in consultation with the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) and the Occupational and Environmental Medicine of Long Island to provide health related information related to the alleged illegal dumping at the Sweet Hills Riding Center. An investigation by the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office indicates that most of the dumped material appears to be finely processed construction and demolition debris. Construction and demolition debris is waste material from the construction, renovation, and demolition of structures such as buildings.

As part of the District Attorney's investigation, soil samples were collected at the Sweet Hills Riding Center. The results of laboratory analyses conducted on those samples do not suggest excessive, widespread contamination. Although the results identified levels of contaminants that may exceed the allowable levels required for a criminal prosecution under state environmental laws, only a small percentage of the samples show contaminant levels that exceed either background levels or a soil guideline (New York State Restricted Residential Soil Cleanup Objectives). In the few samples in which a guideline or background was exceeded, the contaminant levels were not exceedingly high, and State Health officials advise that similar levels have been found historically in New York State surface soils having no obvious source of contamination. Some pieces of debris were also found to contain asbestos, though it was found to be non-friable asbestos. Non-friable asbestos is a form that does not readily release asbestos fibers when handled, which limits the chance of exposure, and therefore health risk. In conclusion, after consultation with the NYSDOH, the contaminant levels in the dumped material do not represent an unusual exposure for an active recreational setting, such as the riding center.

Regarding medical testing, based on a review of the data, it is the consensus of the NYSDOH, the Occupational and Environmental Medicine of Long Island, and SCDHS that there is no need for blood or other testing (such as urine or skin testing). Such testing would not provide useful information to individuals who participated in activities at the Sweet Hills Riding Center or their health care providers.



OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER
3500 Sunrise Highway, Ste. 124, PO Box 9006, Great River, NY 11739-9006
(631) 854-0000 Fax (631) 854-0108

We encourage individuals who would like more information to contact the specialty organizations below and/or their health care provider. SCDHS will provide an update to this letter if further information becomes available.

Contacts and Resources

- Questions about West Hills Park: Please call the Suffolk County Department of Parks, Recreation and Conservation: <http://www.suffolkcountyny.gov/Departments/Parks.aspx> or 631-854-4609
- Questions on air quality and hazardous or solid waste cleanups: Please contact the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (1-800-535-1345) or visit their website at http://www.dec.ny.gov/cfm/xtapps/aqi/aqi_forecast.cfm and <http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8486.html>
- For information about the Suffolk County District Attorney's Investigation, call (631) 853-5602, or visit: <http://www.suffolkcountyny.gov/Portals/da/PDFs/october%202016/2016%2010%2013%20labtestshow.pdf>
- For information from the Suffolk County Department of Health Services about the Sweet Hills Riding Center:
 - <http://www.suffolkcountyny.gov> and see "Updates on Health Concerns Related to Dumping Grounds in Suffolk County" at bottom of page, or
 - Contact Amy Juchatz at 631-854-0087
- Specific questions about your public drinking water: Please contact the South Huntington Water District at 631-427-8190 or <http://www.shwd.org/contact.htm>
- Questions about water quality: Please contact the Suffolk County Department of Health Services, Office of Water Resources at 631-852-5810
- General questions about asbestos, dust or chemicals in soil: Please see the New York State Department of Health website links below or call 518-402-7800 or 800-458-1158
 - Asbestos: <http://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/indoors/asbestos>
 - Dust: http://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/indoors/air/pmq_a.htm
 - Chemical Exposures: <http://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/about/exposure.htm>
- For occupational and environmental medical specialists:
 - Occupational and Environmental Medicine of Long Island (questions related to adult exposures) at 631-439-5300 or <https://www.northwell.edu/find-care/services-we-offer/occupational-and-environmental-medicine/about#37106>
 - Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit at Mount Sinai Hospital, New York (health care provider questions related to exposures to children): 866-265-6201 or <http://icahn.mssm.edu/research/pehsu>

Sincerely,



James L. Tomarken, MD, MPH, MBA, MSW
Commissioner, Suffolk County Department of Health Services

JLT/srg



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