

**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
ABOUT THE
SCIO TOWNSHIP CITIZENS' PROPOSAL FOR THE
GELMAN SCIENCES GROUNDWATER CLEAN-UP**

• **How will the money raised by the proposed millage be used?**

The money will be used exclusively to finance and support legal and other necessary measures to prevent dumping into Honey Creek of greater than 3 ppb (the drinking water standard set by the EPA) of 1,4-dioxane. Monies will not be used to help pay for any part of the cleanup, as this is in no way the citizens' responsibility.

• **How much money will be raised and how long will the increased millage occur?**

We are requesting a .50 millage increase for a 3-year period. This is a time-limited, predictable increase for each taxpayer. A .50 increase would raise about \$240,000 per year. It would increase the taxes on a \$100,000 home (true cash value) by \$25 per year.

• **What happens if the millage increase passes, and then the funds are not needed?**

If the MDNR and Gelman Sciences agree to a fully protective cleanup before the increased millage is assessed, the millage increase will cease and monies would not be collected. If funds are not needed once collected, a public decision would be made about what to do with remaining funds. One suggestion is to place monies in a special environmental fund for long-term assurance of groundwater protection in our township.

• **Who decides how funds are used?**

A special committee will be established to discuss this issue. The committee will be comprised of both elected township officials and citizen members.

• **Who has initiated the petition drive?**

Scio Township citizens, with the full concurrence of the Scio Township Supervisor, the Scio Township Board of Trustees, and the Citizens Review Committee. This is not a campaign "orchestrated" in any way by any other group, including the Ecology Center, as Gelman Sciences claims. The Ecology Center as an entity is supportive of the citizens' efforts, but is not circulating petitions.

• **Is there a precedent for a millage like this in other townships?**

Yes. The citizens of Augusta Township passed a millage increase to oppose efforts by Envotech to put a hazardous waste landfill on Arkona Road in their township. Citizens in Augusta Township perceived, like us, that groundwater in new areas could become contaminated in cleaning up older areas already polluted. Citizens there voted in a millage increase of 1 mil for 4 years, which was then renewed for another 4 years. This is a significant precedent because of the similarities of citizens' concerns, and also because their township is primarily agricultural and rural, with a lower median income than ours.

• **If the millage passes, will the cleanup be delayed?**

No. The Washtenaw County Commissioners, the Scio Township Board and the Citizens Review Committee all have adopted a plan that would get the cleanup started right away with no risk of further contamination resulting from discharge to Honey Creek. Gelman Sciences has spent much time, effort and money to discredit our position, and claims that we are the ones delaying the cleanup. The Michigan Attorney General's office in a March 1994 letter stated that it is GSI that bears the responsibility for delay in

implementing groundwater cleanup, by choosing not to pursue alternative cleanup options, including treating to 0-3 ppb.

- **Tell me more about the citizens' position.**

The citizens' position represents a reasonable, rational compromise. Our position states that 1,4-dioxane in the water that will be discharged to Honey Creek has to be reduced to groundwater standards (0-3ppb) prior to discharge. This is based on the fact that there has been no proof that water in Honey Creek does not migrate into the groundwater aquifer that supplies drinking water. In fact, available information indicates that water from at least some portions of the Honey Creek tributary and the creek itself may enter the groundwater aquifer at certain times of the year. The existing state permit fully protects groundwater from being polluted by the discharge of 1,4-dioxane to the creek. It requires the company to prove that water from the creek does not enter the groundwater or will not cause pollution before they begin any discharge. GSI began planning to provide that proof back in 1990. In 4 years they have not been successful. Now they are asking the state to let them discharge 1,4-dioxane at levels in excess of what is protective of groundwater and then monitor 3 places along the creek to see if 1 ppb or more of groundwater contamination occurs. This shifts the burden of risk to citizens. The Michigan Department of Public Health will recommend not using our domestic wells for drinking water if 1,4-dioxane is detected at levels of 2 ppb. The difference between 1 ppb in a monitoring well and 2 ppb in a domestic well anywhere along the creek is a very small amount and is hard to determine with accuracy.

- **How dangerous is 1,4-dioxane?**

1,4-dioxane is classified as a probable human carcinogen based on animal studies. Research done in 1990 also showed evidence of DNA damage in animals. This chemical has not been widely studied and there is little human carcinogenicity research. However, the lack of human evidence must not be considered the absence of human carcinogenicity, but rather a lack of adequate human investigation studies. Like many other chemicals, 1,4-dioxane may well be shown to be more toxic as more studies are done. 1,4-dioxane is a highly effective groundwater polluter. It moves everywhere that water does and will not biodegrade or settle out of groundwater once it gets there.

- **How is 1,4-dioxane destroyed so that levels of 0-3 ppb can be reached?**

Current technology being used by Gelman Sciences at a site in Ann Arbor (the Evergreen neighborhood) involves using ultraviolet light and hydrogen peroxide to break down the chemical. Gelman Sciences claims that it is not feasible to use this same technology to treat the highly contaminated "core" concentrations of 1,4-dioxane to levels as low as 0-3 ppb, because the water quality is different there. All indications are that the technology currently in operation as well as pilot tests in 1992 using the actual core contaminated "water" show that levels of 3 ppb and below are feasible. Estimates of the differential costs of treating from 60-100 ppb to 0-3 ppb are an additional \$100,000 per year.

- **How can I help?**

Call or write the Governor, your legislators, and the Department of Natural Resources.

Vote YES on the environmental fund/citizens' millage request.

For more information, call 761-6064 or 995-0931.