



DIDI BARRETT
Assemblymember 103rd District

THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

COMMITTEES
Aging
Agriculture
Veterans' Affairs

Hon. Joe Martens, Commissioner
NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233

August 7th, 2012

RE: Prolonged effects from the fire at the TCI Inc. recycling facility in West Ghent

Dear Commissioner Martens,

I am writing to hear directly from your office about the effects on agriculture, animals and home gardens of the chemical fire that took place at the TCI Inc. recycling plant on Thursday, August 2, 2012 in the Town of Ghent. I attended part of the briefing and press conference on Thursday and I have been following this situation as closely as I can from the media. I continue to receive numerous inquiries from constituents from the Town of Ghent, which I represent. People feel they are not getting sufficient information.

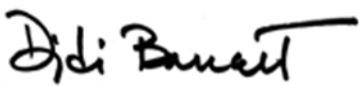
Officials have been saying there should be no concerns about the air quality around the facility and that soot on their property should simply be washed away with soap and water. Many folks, especially those with young children, are uncomfortable with this response, especially since testing is still ongoing and some environmental groups and academics have advised greater caution. I understand that the secondary testing takes some time to yield results after the preliminary data was released indicating acceptable air quality in the area. However, it has now been several days since the incident and we need more definitive answers for those who live and farm in the area.

Several farmers, especially organic farmers, have told me that they are not going to be selling any of their above ground produce as they are unsure whether or not they are safe to consume or can be considered organic any longer. This incident will have a profound impact on our small farms and will hurt our local agricultural economy if farmers feel as though they are not getting adequate information to make the right choices.

Columbia County has the largest senior population per capita of any county in the state. There are several senior residences in the area near the fire and the health of those folks was put at risk by this situation, too. A great number of people and institutions need to make decisions about their families, residents, customers and so on but don't feel they are getting adequate information to make those decisions.

We would like to arrange an information session for constituents in the very near future and ask that you send a representative who can answer questions and allay fears. I look forward to working with you as we move forward to help these New Yorkers through a difficult and troubling time.

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Didi Barret". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Member of Assembly, 103rd District