

## Mcpherson, Benjamin J (DEC)

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**From:** Ian Klenk <klenki@nyassembly.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 18, 2024 2:19 PM  
**To:** Mcpherson, Benjamin J (DEC)  
**Subject:** RE: Tonawanda Coke Public Comment  
**Attachments:** Tonawanda Coke comment.docx

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Good afternoon Benjamin,

I hope this email finds you well. Thank you for responding about this info. Please find attached the comment from Asm. Bill Conrad. Feel free to reach out to our office with any additional questions.

All the best,

Ian Klenk  
Office of Asm. William Conrad

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**From:** Mcpherson, Benjamin J (DEC) <benjamin.mcpherson@dec.ny.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 2, 2024 10:55 AM  
**To:** Ian Klenk <klenki@nyassembly.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: Tonawanda Coke Public Comment

Hi Ian,

Can you clarify what you mean by 'public comment portal'?

If you are looking for where the site related documents are located, they may be accessed using DEC Info Locator (<https://gisservices.dec.ny.gov/gis/dil/>). There are a number of layers on that tool relating to DEC. The site specific document folder is located at: <https://extapps.dec.ny.gov/data/DecDocs/C915353/>.

If you are looking for where to send written comments you can send them directly to me either by email or regular mail.

I hope that helps answer your question, please let me know if you need further clarification.

Thanks,  
Ben McPherson

**Benjamin McPherson, P.E.**

(he/him/his)

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**From:** Ian Klenk <[klenki@nyassembly.gov](mailto:klenki@nyassembly.gov)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 2, 2024 10:28 AM  
**To:** Mcpherson, Benjamin J (DEC) <[benjamin.mcpherson@dec.ny.gov](mailto:benjamin.mcpherson@dec.ny.gov)>  
**Subject:** Tonawanda Coke Public Comment

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**ATTENTION: This email came from an external source. Do not open attachments or click on links from unknown senders or unexpected emails.**

Good morning Benjamin,

I hope this email finds you well. I'm a Legislative Aide for Asm. William Conrad, and our office is drafting a public comment for the Tonawanda Coke remediation site.

I was hoping you could offer help in finding the actual online public comment portal...I can't seem to find it on the DEC website nor can I see any link to it on other platforms and orgs. Am I missing something?

Grateful for your help!

All the best,

**Ian Klenk** *he/him*  
Legislative Aide  
Office of Asm. William C. Conrad, III

The following comment is in support of the remediation plan developed by the Riverview Technology and Innovation Campus. At the beginning of my political career nearly a decade ago, I considered no issue more serious to the wellbeing of our community than the future of the Tonawanda Coke facility. The plant already had a documented history of endangering worker health and safety, including improper storage of hazardous carcinogens—issues that were tragically highlighted by an explosion at the plant in 2014. Following a slew of criminal convictions and stiff penalties for violations of the Clean Air Act, Tonawanda Coke filed for bankruptcy and suddenly deserted the coke plant on River Road. So quickly was this site abandoned by its workers that, later, cleanup crews reported discovering personal items and even unfinished lunches.

My staff and I appreciated the opportunity to tour the site a few weeks ago with Majority Leader Crystal People-Stokes and some of the remediation crew. To hear of the obstacles faced by the cleanup crews was stunning: random pools of dangerous chemicals, unsafe buildings, and even transportation equipment buried in the ground. The site was the stuff of nightmares and, undoubtedly, a catastrophe waiting to happen. It is because of this history that I was so proud to see the site completely transformed with 95% of the hazardous waste removed. What was once a site for negligent and careless pollution is now experiencing a reclamation by Mother Nature (including one defiant osprey). What was once a grotesque collection of unsafe machinery is now industrial land, soon to be ready for development.

My deep gratitude goes out to the professionals at Ontario Specialty Consulting, Inventum, Honeywell, and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. Their sincere commitment to the careful cleanup of the site has been inspiring, and I am grateful for their impressive work. Furthermore, I would like to thank my fellow elected officials and the many community groups—especially the Clean Air Coalition—whose tireless advocacy ensured a better future for this site. National headlines remind us that the story of Tonawanda Coke could have ended much differently. However, thanks to the collaborated efforts of so many, we can now anticipate the swift cleanup of this former coking facility and look forward to the site's redevelopment beginning as early as 2026.

This is a success story unlike any I've witnessed. Local professionals have worked diligently to ensure the safe and timely remediation of the site. The new Riverview Innovation and Technology Campus promises to be an impressive asset to our community, boasting new businesses with good-paying jobs and tax revenue for the Town of Tonawanda. I am so proud that we can put the dark days of Tonawanda Coke behind us as we plan for a new and brighter tomorrow for our community.