



# Letters to the Editor

## The Rule of 5

The survival rule of five, you can live 5 minutes without air, 5 days without water, and 25 days without food. How does food get to store shelves? We have a shortage of trucks. So Canada decided to destroy them, thus less food on store shelves. Two problems are addressed, obesity and Uncle Bernie's standing in bread lines, a good thing. What Fugal leaders don't understand is that their mandates are pushing people into self-preservation. But power fears power and that totalitarian leaders fear is We The People.

Walt Janczak  
Sloansville

## Trash Spies Strike a Nerve in Hughes Energy!

I find it interesting after all the requests for facts from Hughes Energy over the past year and a half about their proposed garbage plant without any response back, including at there so called Town Information Sessions (and yes I was in attendance in person) when all they were interested in was presenting their prepared power point slide show and refused to take ANY questions.

That as soon as the answers we are looking for and found with NO help from Hughes Energy started to be presented to the area residents they now feel the need "reach out directly to the community".

If this is there so called "Hughes team's best efforts" at being transparent with information about the project makes me more nervous than ever before how if built Hughes would manage this garbage plant in a water shed designated zone.

But let's now get to the facts clarification that Mr McSpedon felt the need to school us about I'll just pick a couple. I am sure others will cover the rest.

1. Hughes Energy is the exclusive North American license holder for the Wilson System, which was invented in the UK in 1998 and has been deployed in the UK and Ireland 5 times since.

Ok if this is fact and you are using it as a selling point to the community supply us with all of the location addresses, contact information and operating data about the facilities for each of the five and for the ones if any are no longer active why are they no longer active and their duration of operation.

You can't say look how successful this process is and then say "Tom Wilson, the inventor, sold and installed his system to private companies who then operated the system as they saw fit" and "We have nothing to do with Tom's customers in Europe or where or how they run their businesses" That's what we call talking out of both sides of your mouth.

2. "Today, there are tens of thousands of autoclaves used daily in US industry". Ok if this is fact, how many in the USA are used in the exact application Hughes Energy plans to use them, of the four applications you listed?

NONE are in the garbage processing industry. Again supply us with all of the location addresses, contact information and operating data about the facilities in the garbage processing industry since again you are referencing this as a selling point to the community and made a point to reference one operating since the 1940's at the University of Alabama.

Let's first start here with

you providing this requested information so we The Trash Spies who you reference as providing nonsense to the community can evaluate the safety of this garbage processing plant to our community and, I can assure you, is not pretending with only one motivation which is to stop anyone from destroying or doing harm to our Beautiful, magnificent, scenic community.

Trash Spy  
J. (Joseph) Scarangello  
Grange County (Grand Gorge)

## Re: McSpedon's Letter

Reading Dane McSpedon's letter was like having a first date with the Tinder Swindler. The Tinder Swindler, for those that haven't seen it, is a documentary about a lothario that takes advantage of unsuspecting women using a common dating app. He poses as a diamond heir and ultimately swindles ladies out of hundreds of thousands of dollars using elaborate stories.

Hughes Energy talks a good game pressing all the buttons that appeal to trusting, good hearted, well intentioned folks. Like a smooth talker that says things like "I love you smile! You're so smart! I can't wait to meet your mother" to get into your good graces.

But In Hughes' case, they're claims are 'our solution is great for the environment! We're gonna create all these great jobs! We're gonna give you all this tax money!'

This in the end, it will simply be a folly. Yet Another attempt of government and corporate interests taking advantage of the little man.

One only has to do a simple search on these types of projects. Look up Vero Beach, Florida Ineos plant closed and Hampton, Maine Fibreight Recycling plant to see similar schemes and get a sense of how the future will work out with our latest savior. To see what happened at the first autoclave for municipal waste, look into Sterecycle Rotterdam, UK. You can find a video of the fatal explosion on YouTube.

(<https://www.tqpal.com/story/news/2017/01/17/inco-closes-vero-beach-bio-fuel-plant/96412616/>)

(<https://bangordailynews.com/2020/06/22/news/bangor/here-what-went-wrong-at-the-shuttered-90m-trash-processing-plant-in-hampden/>)

(<https://www.newscentermaine.com/article/file/now-that-the-fiberight-plant-is-closed-waste-from-more-than-100-communities-are-ending-up-in-landfills/97-f9a6f1cb-cfc-430b-9a25-378d21d1bf2>)

(<https://www.detsrecycle.com/news/administrators-abandon-sterecycle-autoclave>)

And just like your best friend that tried to warn you and you didn't believe them only to realize in the end, they were right. They were simply trying to protect you from heartbreak. I appeal to you dear reader. Do not engage.

It's not a downstater vs local or NIMBY vs local jobs issue. As we are divided, we are weakened. Let us collectively reject this marriage of corporate interest and government subsidy or we will once again be it's victim.

Beware those selling promises that sound too good to be true. They usually are.

Allan Aujero  
Roxbury

## Hughes Energy Response

I would like to respond to the letter written by Hughes Energy CEO Dane McSpedon, rife with half-truths, misrepresentations, and misinformation, to deliberately mislead and deceive our community. We may be rural, but we are not as gullible as Hughes thinks we are.

Make no mistake about it, there is a great deal of money at stake here, in the form of state and Federal grants, contracts, and tax incentives, and we must be vigilant in avoiding predatory "greenwashing" non-solutions that will create many more problems than they will solve.

Here is what we know: We could find no evidence of any working Wilson System autoclaves in Europe or the UK, although Hughes says their system has been deployed 5 times. If these were such a success, what has happened to them? If this process is so great, why is it not being used anywhere in the world?

While autoclaves have been used in industry, they have never been used for unsorted, mixed solid waste, known to contain "forever chemicals" that cannot be processed out of garbage.

Canis process be called "Green" given the amount of fossil fuels required to produce biofuel pellets and fibrous material, dependent on four 30,000 gallon propane tanks, air and noise pollution from diesel trucks transporting unregulated municipal solid waste into the facility from 7am-4pm 6 days per week, and the amount of energy needed to transform burn their "final" products?

A garbage facility of this scale (two football fields and 7 stories high) located just 2,000 feet from the Schoharie Creek poses significant issues. The risk of water pollution from the facility and the industrial wastewater product at the facility that is proposed to be discharged into the Schoharie Creek via the Prattsville sewer system is very concerning, despite Hughes' uncorroborated claims that this water is as safe as "kitchen sink water." If it is so safe, why has Hughes stated that "additional safety measures will be installed" to help ensure no contaminants will leak into the Schoharie?

Instead of muddying the facts, why doesn't Hughes answer direct questions, such as: what is the full, lifecycle effect of this project, including all energy used to transport waste, process over 175,000 tons of waste, and deliver waste to its final destinations? And how does that compare with other, proven options available? Have any studies been done?

Stop insulting our intelligence and start giving us straight answers.  
Robin Factor  
Roxbury

## Misleading Garbage

I'd like to address the February 25 letter to the editor from Dane McSpedon, CEO of Hughes Energy Group, regarding the garbage processing plant proposal for Delaware County. Because this proposal sits on the Prattsville town line, and use of our town sewer system is being requested, I feel compelled to respond to several misstatements in the letter written last week.

I will start by saying that when first presented to the town board in 2019, I was intrigued by the possibility that this "miracle" technology that could reduce landfills by 90% may be coming to our back yard. Could we

really address a climate issue, while creating jobs, and add some financial support to our always present "wish list" of community needs. Unfortunately, it appears to be a classic case of "if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is."

When the CEO of Hughes Energy Group (HEG) finds it necessary to mislead the public with inaccurate information, I feel compelled to address his "facts" with the truth.

First, early on, HEG eagerly pointed to their successes in Europe when presenting this concept to our local communities. We've been told that their plant in Limerick, Ireland, although a smaller version and processing lower capacities, was most like the Delaware County proposed plant. This was their "success" story. However, a simple search on the internet shows this plant has been closed, with some officials in Limerick saying it was closed after 5 or 6 months of operation, remaining an eyesore ever since. Although HEG is now trying to distance themselves from this plant, claiming to have "nothing to do with Tom's customers in Europe", this was clearly their "successful" operation 3 years ago when the concept was first presented to us. My request for a location that can show the technology successfully in operation today has gone unanswered.

Second, the suggestion that HEG is "saving us money" countywide is simply not true. McSpedon claims that Greene County charges \$115/ton to dump at their stations. While this is true, the county cost for hauling and disposal of both construction and demolition, and municipal solid waste is \$85/ton. HEG's suggested tipping cost of \$75/ton would not be a cost savings for Greene County. Likewise, Delaware County composts most of their waste, likely limiting their contribution to the 175,000 tons of municipal solid waste within a 50-mile radius" expected at the proposed project site.

One might wonder, if the required tonnage of weight cannot be acquired within a 50-mile radius of the proposed plant, how far out will HEG be willing to go to truck refuse back to our community.

Which brings me to my next point. The DOT traffic study stating 2000 vehicles travel Route 23 per day is likely accurate, however, when stating "the Comptons have 40-45 inbound deliveries per day" McSpadon fails to mention that these vehicles are personal vehicles, and 1 ton and 10-wheel dump trucks, not the significant tractor trailer traffic expected with the Hughes Energy Project. Furthermore, there has been no truck traffic at all in recent months around the proposed HEG site because Compton's have stopped taking deliveries from haulers.

Finally, McSpedon mentions they will "continue to submit letters to town supervisors." These "letters" also tend to have statements intended to mislead the board. In September 2021, HEG provided the Prattsville town board with an updated letter claiming to have "letters of support from two NYS Senators." This has been found to be false information. McSpedon states Senator Oberacker has been a strong supporter of the project but has failed to provide any supporting letters to the town from him or anyone else. Contrary to the CEO's claim, this project has not received any letters of support from any local, state, or federal representatives.

As the Prattsville Town Supervisor, I believe it is important that the facts are shared with our community members, and anyone involved in the review process.

If the Hughes Energy project is worthwhile and the technology so revolutionary, HEG should be willing and able to provide an address where a fully operational plant can be seen. HEG should be able to provide real data that can be confirmed. These are both reasonable requests.

Mr. McSpadon was right about one thing, "the local community has a bucket of talent" which leaves me wondering why he and HEG would think anyone would ever believe their misleading GARBAGE.

Greg Cross, Supervisor  
Town of Prattsville

## Cannot Take Seriously

It is hard to take Dane McSpedon's letter to the Mountain Eagle (Feb. 18, 2022) seriously. Surely the team at Hughes could provide a better response to the concerns and criticism they have received from local residents who will be affected by their dubious proposal to build a garbage processing plant in Grand Gorge on the border with Prattsville. In fact, McSpedon's letter shows little regard for the truth, minimal knowledge of the details of Hughes's own proposal and its consequences, and little regard for the legitimate, research-based claims made by the project's critics. Hughes should be embarrassed to have McSpedon's letter published in their name.

My family is a longtime resident of Grand Gorge, living in a farmhouse surrounded by active agricultural lands accessed through both Route 23 and Route 30. We will be directly and consistently affected by the noise, odor, and diesel truck traffic should the plant be built.

What follows are rebuttals to three claims made by McSpedon in his recent letter.

McSpedon on the existing site:

"We chose the site in Grand Gorge to establish our first plant in North America. The reasoning was quite simple—Brendan lives in the area and knows...[the] residents who have owned and operated the Green-Del Transfer Station on Rt 23 for 13 years and recently received a 10-year extension on their permit..."

Brendan saw an opportunity to upgrade the current older transfer station with his technology in a town which he loves."

Problem: With all due respect to the Comptons, the projected Hughes plant is not on the Green-Del site, and the current transfer station is not being "upgraded." According to Hughes's own documentation (SEQRA, E3), it is NOT an extension of an existing system: the proposed site is actually on an adjacent 39.6 acre parcel. Moreover, the Green-Del transfer station has been closed for several years, and when it was in operation, the trucks were generally pick-up trucks carrying small debris, not massive diesel tractor trailers carrying tons of unsorted trash.

McSpedon on the visibility of the facility: "The plant will not be visible from the road, only the visitor center will be visible." Problem: the permit application to the DEC states that the plant, a 60 ft. tall structure (75 ft. including smoke stack), will be visible for a 5 mile radius. As such, it will not only be visible, but an eyesore in our rural setting.

McSpedon on traffic: "the plant expects truck traffic will be increased by no

more than 65 vehicles a day (26 in bound delivery trucks, 16 outbound, and 14 other commercial vehicles)." He goes on to claim that "the increase in vehicle traffic per day is not a serious concern."

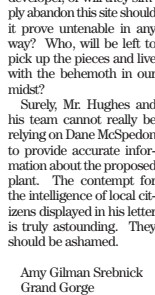
Problem: By their own calculations, the proposed plan will result in a "substantial increase in traffic above present levels...or generate substantial new demand for transportation facilities or services." Highest levels of traffic, their document states, "will be between 7:00AM and 4:00PM," peak hours of local residential and commercial traffic, including school buses. And while McSpedon claims that this will result in 65 additional vehicles a day, their DEC SEQRA document actually states the plant "will generate new traffic trips within an estimated daily traffic count of 101 vehicles and a peak design hour of 22 vehicles." Again, they state that "176,400 tons per year (565 tons of trash per day) will be delivered by semi-trailers...and 105,840 tons per year of fuel pellet removal by semi-trailer." The facility, as planned, will also operate 24 hours per day.

We will rely on others more knowledgeable to address McSpedon's statements about water and air pollution. As local residents however, we remain very concerned about other issues not addressed by him or his team: 1) the potential for accidents at the plant; and 2) responsibility for resale or decommissioning of the site. The proposed plant depends on four 30,000 gallon propane tanks, as well as a massive autoclave processor that, in other settings, has created serious accidents. Should an explosion, fire, or any other accident occur on this site, there is no adequate existing infrastructure to deal with it. Our area relies on local volunteer fire departments, and has few medical facilities and hospitals (Oneonta, Cooperstown, Albany) are 45-60 miles away.

Hughes reputation for starting and bailing out of large projects has been well documented. What, we ask, are the future plans for the proposed site? Will Hughes re-sell to yet another developer, or will they simply abandon this site should it prove untenable in any way? Who, will be left to pick up the pieces and live with the blemish on our midst?

Surely, Mr. Hughes and his team cannot really be relying on Dane McSpedon to provide accurate information about the proposed plant. The contempt for the intelligence of local citizens displayed in his letter is truly astounding. They should be ashamed.

Any Gilman Srebnick  
Grand Gorge



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