



NINA PIERPONT M.D. PH.D.

February 11, 2013

Mayor Todd LePine  
Village of Malone

Mr. Thomas Leitz  
Franklin County Administrator

Dear Mr. LePine and Mr. Leitz,

In the event of a catastrophic collapse of the building at 395 W. Main St., the Malone Village sewer main running in the bed of the Salmon River is at risk. According to John MacArthur, PE, in his engineer's report of November 30, 2012, 1.2 million gallons of raw sewage flow through this pipe daily. In his words, "Collapse of the building would rupture this main, causing significant environmental hazard and disrupting sewer service to a large percentage of the Village of Malone."

Let's unpack what this means.

This pipe would be crushed and broken. Mr. MacArthur states that the pile of rubble filling the Salmon River canyon is likely to be 20 feet high. The following scenarios are likely to ensue:

- 1) Raw sewage will be spilled into the Salmon River. This could be any quantity up to 1.2 million gallons daily. This will flow down the river, affecting several towns in Franklin County, and cross the international border into Canada and the St. Lawrence River. (Are there any towns downstream that get their drinking water from the river?)
- 2) Because of the 20-foot-high rock dam in the Salmon River, there may be flooding near the river immediately upstream, south of Main Street/Route 11. This floodwater could also be contaminated with raw sewage.
- 3) If the pipe is crushed or blocked with rock debris, sewage will back up in the extensive sewer system served by this pipe, rendering drains and toilets unusable in the four schools, community college, and numerous homes, businesses, and rental properties served by this sewer main.
- 4) Sewer line backup can cause leakage or flooding of raw sewage in basements. (I recently bought and then demolished a house at 52 Milwaukee St. where, in the past, this occurred repetitively during routine flushing of Village sewer lines.)
- 5) Raw sewage carries infectious diseases. These include pathogenic forms of *E. coli* (some of which cause severe illness and possible death due to sepsis, renal failure, and disseminated intravascular coagulation), varieties of *Salmonella* (of which typhoid is the best known), Hepatitis A virus, and a multitude of other viruses that cause diarrhea and vomiting. In the summer, sewage also carries fecally transmitted enterovirus (of which polio is the best known) that cause fevers, viral meningitis, and polio-like syndromes.



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- 6) Because of the health risks associated with a spill of raw sewage, it would not be unreasonable for the New York State Departments of Health and Environmental Conservation to mandate an evacuation of all the schools, homes, businesses, and rental properties served by the broken sewer main—until it is bypassed. At a minimum, Mr. Leitz has told me, FEMA would need 4-5 days to bypass the broken sewer main.
- 7) The cleanup from the sewage spill, including the sewage-contaminated floodwater, would take far longer, starting with the removal of the many tons of rubble from the deep Salmon River canyon.

To prevent this scenario, immediate seizure, protection, and demolition of the building at 395 W. Main St. must take place.

Protection in this case means protection from the significant vibration caused by vehicular traffic, including the many large and heavy trucks, that pass within feet of its door and over the immediately adjacent Salmon River bridge. Vibration shakes old mortared stonework loose—witness the expensive repair done to the Congregational Church tower last year. Half a block from Main Street, parts of my house shake when big trucks pass.

For these reasons, alone, I urge you both, as an immediate measure under a State of Emergency to forestall the above scenario, to close the section of Main Street/Route 11 that includes 395 W. Main St., including of course the bridge over the Salmon River.

Respectfully,



Nina Pierpont, MD, PhD