

Carolyn Lederman Barotz, M.D.
272 Madison Road
Scarsdale, NY 10583

April 16, 2013

The Honorable Douglas H. French, Mayor
The Honorable Peter W. Jovanovich, Deputy Mayor
The Honorable Laura U. Brett
The Honorable Richard P. Filippi
The Honorable Julie P. Killian
The Honorable Catherine F. Parker
The Honorable Joseph A. Sack
The City Council of the City of Rye
1037 Boston Post Road
Rye, NY 10580

Re: Hen Island, Rye, New York

Dear Mayor French and Council Members,

I am writing as a resident of Hen Island, New York, a mother of two young children ages ten and seven, and a physician.

My husband and his parents have been residents of Hen Island for over 30 years. My husband grew up with Hen Island as part of his family and through him I have come to love the island for its natural beauty and everything that it has to offer all of the families who reside there.

While I know that the issue of mosquitos and the mosquito infestation on Hen Island is not new to this Council, as a mother of two young children and a physician, I am writing to bring the issue before the Council again and request the Council's help in trying to solve what is not only a potential danger to the residents of Hen Island but to all residents of Rye and its neighboring towns.

As I am sure the members of the Council are aware, some mosquitos are carriers of West Nile virus, and humans who contract the virus can become seriously ill. The severest of symptoms can include high fever, headache, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, vision loss, numbness and paralysis. These symptoms may last several weeks, and neurological effects may be permanent. **Young children and the elderly are particularly susceptible to contracting the virus from carrier mosquitoes.**

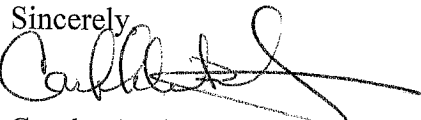
According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), as of December 11, 2012, 48 states have reported West Nile virus infections in people, birds, or mosquitoes. A total of 5,387 cases of West Nile virus disease in people, including 243 deaths, have been reported to CDC. Of these, 2,734 (51%) were classified as neuroinvasive disease (such as meningitis or encephalitis) and 2,653 (49%) were classified as non-neuroinvasive disease.

The 5,387 cases reported thus far in 2012 is the highest number of West Nile virus disease cases reported to CDC since 2003. Eighty percent of the cases have been reported from 13 states (Texas, California, Louisiana, Illinois, Mississippi, South Dakota, Michigan, Oklahoma, Nebraska, Colorado, Arizona, Ohio, and **New York**)

After some mosquitos on Hen Island tested positive last summer, I developed serious concerns for the health and safety of my family. My concerns relate to the large quantities of stored, open, stagnant water allowed to exist on the Island. After reviewing Operation Mosquito STING, Westchester County Department of Health's Mosquito Control plan on the Westchester County website, I began to question the water storage and breeding sites that are allowed to exist on Hen Island.

I believe there are many basic measures that could and should be incorporated to eliminate mosquito breeding sites on Hen Island. One simple measure would be **to remove the present stored water containment systems and breeding sites** that encourage this potentially life-threatening disease. I recognize that though the risk to any one individual of contracting West Nile virus is small, the consequences of such an infection can be severe. As a physician, I appreciate that preventative measures are the best way to avoid illness.

The Environmental Protection Agency advocates that community-based prevention measures focused on eliminating the mosquito breeding grounds and sources of standing water can be incredibly effective in eliminating this health and safety risk. As a mother and physician, I urge the City Council to take a leadership role in implementing these measures.

Sincerely

Carolyn Lederman Barotz, M.D.

CLB/mg