

# Hill Harper Leads Meeting on Water Contamination

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*Actor and environmental activist Hill Harper talks to a group of concerned citizens last Monday night at the Hampton Inn about the water contamination issue that has affected people in the City and Town of Newburgh as well as New Windsor.*

**By Jennifer L. Warren**

**NEWBURGH** – “If you have lived here, you have been exposed.”

These potent words were uttered by television and movie actor Hill Harper (The Good Doctor) at Newburgh’s Hampton Inn Monday night. Here, around fifty people gathered to listen in on the details about a pending Class Action Lawsuit now being set in motion involving the 2013 water contamination, affecting the Town and City of Newburgh as well as New Windsor residents. The accusations revolve around a cover up of the results of a study on the effects of

the exposure to Perfluorooctane Sulfonate (PFOS) and Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and the origin of water contamination traced to the Air National Guard Base at Stewart Airport.

Harper, who in addition to having a Harvard Law Degree is also deeply involved in and passionate about environmental issues, particularly those that affect all populations, was urging folks in attendance to sign up with a firm he was representing, Napoli Shkolnik PLLC in Manhattan; however, despite which attorneys anyone chose, Harper was more concerned with those affected getting actively involved with any lawyer due to the severity and extensiveness of the issue.

"At the end of the day, if not enough people sign up and get involved with this lawsuit, we send a message that it's o.k. to kill people," said an energized Harper. "We all have a right to clean water, and we need to let those who didn't allow that know that we will come after you." Harper added, "The issues here in Newburgh are just too important to be ignored. Those facets involve multiple testimonies of residents who have suffered debilitating physical, emotional and financial effects due to the powerful chemicals occupying their water supply. Whether it was from directly drinking it, showering or bathing in it or simply cooking with it, research shows that water laden with these types of chemicals "bind to blood," leading to multiple illnesses, including testicular and kidney cancer as well as thyroid issues.

Harper carefully led the group through the process that will soon be unraveling once the lawsuit is in motion. Conducting a quick question and answer forum, he had the two representing lawyers provide as much detail as they could. One query was, "What can I expect from a lawsuit?" The answer from lawyer Patrick Lanciotti, "Quality representation, and people who will move aggressively on your behalf." Another question: How long will such a lawsuit take. The response: "About 2-5 years, but hard to determine exactly in these kinds of cases."

Some other concerns included; "Can I recover monies on such things as bottled water?" The answer was yes, and there was a strong plea to save all receipts on everything. Another question: "How did you (the firm) become involved in the lawsuit?" Their reply centered around having had read about it all over the news. Also a question was asked about whether the contamination had affected those with well water. A definite yes resounded from the lawyers.

"This is an issue about profits over public safety," affirmed Harper. "No matter what you do, make sure in some way you get the message out about this injustice to others and you are a party to this lawsuit."