

Good morning. I'm Rebekah Creshkoff, and I live in Callicoon.

Some legislators spoke of the need for more research into Hughes Energy, so we have done it for you.

In January, Hughes CEO Dane McSpedon told *The Post-Star* that the company needed a \$90 million loan to build its garbage pressure-cooking plant in Fort Edward.

Fast forward to last week, when Joe Betro stood here and said Hughes Energy has \$10 billion in financing from a Canadian hedge fund. Is it true? We don't know — they're a privately held company, so we can't know anything about their financial health.

It's a different story in the UK and Ireland, where the owners of Hughes Energy and Wilson Bio-Chemical, which developed their proprietary garbage-cooking system, and their associates have been involved in 11 limited liability corporations. All but three have declared bankruptcy or been dissolved, and none of those remaining companies is profitable.

Given this lineage of failures, the county should ask Hughes to put up a surety bond for \$5 million in escrow so we're not left holding the bag when their operation goes belly up.

This technology was first tried more than 20 years ago, yet no facility using this process has operated for more than a few years. Steam autoclaving garbage makes no sense, either economically or in any other way.

Hughes holds up Juno as an example. We have no idea how much Georgia-Pacific is subsidizing Juno, which lets them get an inroad into the highly profitable waste industry. But we do know Georgia-Pacific's owners, the Koch brothers, have deep pockets.

We found an industrial engineer who was called in to troubleshoot a garbage autoclave facility in California the mid-2000s. He won't speak on record because of a confidentiality agreement, but said the technology was very similar to what Hughes is proposing.

The operation had trouble finding a market for the fiber it separated out, which went to make the lowest-grade cardboard used to package computers. That facility closed in a few years following many technical problems culminating in multiple lawsuits. The company ultimately merged with an unrelated company. An SEC filing for the merger revealed that one reason the facility failed was that it could not obtain a contract for the fiber it produced.

Hughes Energy does not present an alternative to landfilling. The engineer said that the autoclave facility brought in garbage from a waste transfer station at the same industrial park. After it was autoclaved and the fiber screened out, the wet cooked garbage was trucked back to the transfer station. Our own Public Works commissioner, Ed McAndrew, said that up to 70% of the solid waste we bring them will remain processing, and the county will still need to dispose of that.

One final point: Joe Betro claimed their technology removes 90 percent of the PFAS in municipal solid waste. The county should demand documentation to support that. If any company could remove PFAS, that would be their main line of business.

The fact that this is Hughes' fifth attempt in the region should give you all pause. If you'd like to speak to decision makers in other counties that have rejected Hughes, we can put you in touch with them, lest Hughes' pipe dream becomes your nightmare.