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# Schroepfel weighs in on Bion project

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Schroepfel Town Supervisor Paul Casler Jr. stressed Monday, that Schroepfel Town Council members are only seeking more information regarding the development of a potential beef finishing and ethanol production facility being developed in the town.

In December, the council passed a resolution that stated just that, the supervisor explained.

"There is no approval of the project," Casler said. "Basically the resolution said that the town unanimously agrees, and supports working with Bion toward this project."

According to members of Bion Environmental Technologies Inc., the 72,000-heard cattle project in Oswego County's borders would involve a focus on cattle slaughter for beef distribution in eastern sections of the U.S. and portions of southeastern Canada. The cattle could be placed in multiple locations to suit space specifications.

During a presentation by Bion representatives last week on the SUNY Oswego campus, they described the project being placed on five separate locations that would each hold 14,400 cows placed on plots of land between 150-300 acres.

Officials of the company have also asserted that the project could result in the development of nearly 600 jobs, totaling approximately \$20.3 million in annual salaries. The project would also create 2,000 construction jobs for the proposal's development, Bion representatives said.

The resolution passed by Schroepfel states that the town council is committed to promoting job growth and economic development, and goes on to state that if the "town board finds that the town of Schroepfel would be a suitable location for the Bion project," that the town does express its support for the development of the proposed Bion project.

The resolution later states that the project would be subject to "all necessary due diligence, including adherence to all pertinent federal, state and local laws, rules and regulations, including those related to land use control and planning and environmental protection."

In the final paragraph, the resolution reads that it is resolved "that the town board urges other federal, state and local officials to work cooperatively towards (sic) the development of the Bion project."

"We have seen this presented to us, and we now figure that it would take a few years for it to happen, but it is something we need to look at and get some answers about," Casler said. Bion representatives have stated that no particular site within county borders has been established at this point, and they are just seeking interest.

Casler noted that he does have concern regarding the project's use of new, largely untested technology, but noted that Bion would have to first clear hurdles, including environmental impact queries by the Department of Environmental Conservation.

Casler also spoke on questions raised by individuals speaking out against the project, including Bion's

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statement that they would not take out any bonds to reimburse farms affected by the potential spread of disease through cattle, affecting other farms in the county.

"If someone requires them to put a bond up in order to do this, then New York state is going to have to follow precedence," Casler said. "No other farm in New York state has to put a bond up to operate."

Another issue that came to light during last week's forum put on by Bion, was the fact that the company would be selling the technology and not running the project.

Casler stated that he knew this fact.

"Bion would probably still have a little to do with (the project), including dealing with the finances," he said. Casler added that the company would most likely want to have professionals deal with the operation of the facility.

The town supervisor added that if there were not any public support, the issue would be moot, as the town would not pursue the development of the project.

"We will listen to everybody," Casler said. He added that if members of Bion see that those in the county are not interested, they will move on.

"That's my opinion," Casler said. "They are not going to want to come to a place where people don't want them."

During an Oswego County Environmental Management Council meeting held Monday at Mexico Point Park, council Chairman Timothy Carroll described his interpretation of Bion's seemingly failed relationship with St. Lawrence County, supporting Casler's view.

Carroll noted that a task force was put together in the county to pursue hard-hitting questions for Bion members.

"The thing just kind of broke down and Bion walked away," Carroll said. He added that Bion pursued St. Lawrence County because of the port of Ogdensburg, which parallels Bion's interest in Oswego County, with the port's location in the city of Oswego.

"There was a lot of opposition (in St. Lawrence County), but there was nothing on an official level as far as a resolution," Carroll said.

For more on Bion's project as proposed for Oswego County, visit the company's website at [www.biontech.com](http://www.biontech.com).

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