

From: Andy Gordon
Sent: October 10, 2006
To: Todd Chadwell
Subject: Review Team Evaluation Comments

I recently observed that the Housatonic River Initiative's grant proposal was rated #4 among environmental education and outreach proposals in the NRD process. I feel that this rating is undeserved and unwarranted, because the HRI has been by far the most forceful, effective, broad-based and productive group in the entire cleanup effort. I have been observing the cleanup controversy for 25 years, and I can say without reservation that the entire cleanup effort was ignited by the citizen activists of the HRI, who brought crowds to regulatory meetings and chanting demonstrators to the steps of City Hall in Pittsfield. That was the spark that brought GE to the negotiating table and started the cleanup, and the HRI has since been working tirelessly to strengthen the cleanup of the rest of the river.

Some of the more established environmental groups in the area, some of whom have accepted financial donations from GE, have been resentful and obstructive towards the HRI, perhaps because HRI has chosen to mobilize citizens and demand action, rather than to court favor among politicians, business owners and regulators to get the river cleaned up. Be that as it may, the HRI's credibility, impact and RESULTS are unmatched among all the grant applicants. If this is really a public process, in which the Public Interest is the ultimate criteria for judgement, then results will matter more than connections in evaluating these proposals. Nobody has been more tireless, dedicated and productive in restoring and protecting the Housatonic River than the HRI, and it's a breach of trust in citizen activism to rate their proposal so poorly. Please reconsider this rating, and acknowledge the HRI's indispensable role in getting the river cleaned up. There probably wouldn't even be any NRD money to talk about if the HRI hadn't been agitating for a cleanup for years. They deserve a better rating from the people who are now in charge of the NRD money. Thanks for your time and attention. Yours, Andy Gordon, Lenox