**FAG**

Farmers Action Group

P.O.Box 2009, Vadodara 390 002

Reg Nos. F/1821/Vadodara-Trust Act

Guj/1604/Vadodara-Societies Act

* **The Chairman**

**Central Pollution Control Board**

Parivesh Bhawan, CBD-cum-Office Complex,

East Arjun Nagar, DELHI - 110 032

* **The Member Secretary**

**Central Pollution Control Board**

Parivesh Bhawan, CBD-cum-Office Complex,

East Arjun Nagar, DELHI - 110 032

* **The Nodal Officer (CETP/STP/ETP)**

Dr. (Mrs.) Susane George Karumanchery

Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change

Government of India

Paryavaran Bhavan, Jor Bagh Road, New Delhi - 110 003

* **The Additional Director & The Nodal Officer (CETP/STP/ETP)**

Shri. Ajay Aggarwal

Central Pollution Control Board

  Parivesh Bhawan, CBD-cum-Office Complex,

  East Arjun Nagar, DELHI - 110 032

* **Zonal Officer CPCB**

Parivesh Bhavan

Opp Ward Office 10, Subhanpura

Vadodara 390023

* **Chairman GPCB**

**Gujarat Pollution Control Board**

Sector 10A, Paryavaran Bhavan

GANDHINAGAR – 382010

* **Member Secretary GPCB**

Sector 10A

Paryavaran Bhavan

GANDHINAGAR – 382010

* **Regional Officer GPCB**

GERI Compound

Race Course Circle

VADODARA – 390007

* **The Collector**

Kothi Kacheri, VADODARA – 390001

* **Hon. Chairman, GIDC**

Block 4, 2nd Floor, Udyog Bhavan

GANDHINAGAR

* **The Managing Director, VECL,**

Vadodara Enviro Channel Ltd (formerly Effluent Channel Project Ltd)

Plot No.304/1,317&31, At & Post Dhanora, VADODARA – 391346

Sirs, 23rd May 2019

**Request for a transparent engineering solution for countering pollution threat to groundwater used in farms and villages**

This letter is in continuation of our last letter to you of 06.05.2019.

The old Effluent Channel is referred to as ECP in this letter, and Vadodara Enviro Channel Ltd. (Formally Effluent Channel Project Ltd., ECPL) as VECL, and Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation, a Government of Gujarat Undertaking, as GIDC. PSS is Paryavaran Suraksha Samiti,a Petitioner in Writ Petition (Civil) No. 375 of 2012 of Hon. Supreme Court of India.

As requested, we turned up at the ECP on 22nd May 2019, with a view to commence digging and seeing below the pipe if there is a leakage. Representatives of GPCB, VECL and PSS were present with us.

We were asked to show where the leaks were, which we did, at a few places, along Villages Luna, Ekalbara, and Dudhwada, where soil on top and side of the pipe, enclosed in ECP, had distinct wet patches. The initial diagnosis of VECL was that the moist patches were from washing of clothes of residents and new construction in the area. We said that our complaint cannot be brushed aside as irrelevant, and we proceeded to show a number of wet spots, located above ECP.

We extended cooperation as farmers, and wet spots on the soil were glaringly visible, even after having been subjected to the current weather in Vadodara District, being a long spell of extreme hot weather, above 40 degrees C, for days together. The monsoon rains, though delayed, are also fast approaching. We showed a few spots, to help VECL start digging and checking.

We asked for digging to commence. VECL Engineer categorically mentioned that there is going to be no digging today and FAGs job is just to show us spots, and as far as leak checking is concerned, if VECL executive heads so desire, they will do so in presence of GPCB, in future. We were just called do the homework, and VECL was there to observe, not dig. The entire exercise therefore, turned out to be cynical joke.

Our Hon PM has been pushing us all, for Clean India. The future of farms is to use Solar and Wind Power and, for farmers to survive, surely, Pollution Control of groundwater.

The proof of the pudding is in the eating. You cannot observe the leak unless you dig, as the pipes were covered up with soil by VECL, though we had pointed out *ab initio* that the pipes are leaking at the joints, while the pipes were being laid, before the cover up operation of VECL took place.

If we could clearly observe the leaks whilst the pipes were installed, surely VECL engineers were in the know, of what was happening. Shockingly, the effluent continued to flow continuously all the time whilst the pipes were being installed inside ECP. This is bad engineering and there is no precedent of this practice in the world, as far as we are aware.

At the expense of sounding uncharitable, we must point out the lapses of industrial professionals and engineers of VECL. Interestingly it was the same junior engineer who represented VECL today, telling us what to do, who was in charge of installation and cover-up operation of ECP pipes, to whom we had pointed out, far back in time, that the pipes that were in the process of being installed, were leaking at the joints, and established engineering practices were not followed by VECL contractors. Our efforts were ignored and VECL quickly covered up their mistake by a soil cover of sandy loam.

What is more shocking, is that we were told by VECL today, that soil will compact with rains, and this will stop the leaks. At Village Dudhwada, where the pipe, laid inside the ECP, was exposed, the solution suggested by the Engineer was to fill up ECP with soil. This is serious, as soil placed by ECP in their cover-up operation was “sandy loam” which is pervious. Even clay-rich soil will not offer total imperviousness. It appears that VECL is hell-bent on inaction till rains fall. We request that experienced engineers, government or otherwise, be consulted in time, for what to do, and geologists for understanding the effect of soil types used for VECL’s cover up.

We have a right to speak and be heard. Please let us know how are the leaks of the pipe at joints, installed in stretches in ECP, are going to be stopped.

Thanking you,

Yours faithfully,

*Encl: Six photographs of some wet patches along and on side of ECP*