

\$75M sewer project is clogged up in Pocono Township

Kink in the pipeline has six parties pointing fingers

By [David Pierce](#)

Pocono Record Writer

June 19, 2013 12:00 AM

Pocono Township supervisors Tuesday authorized spending \$233,000 on an engineering redesign to fix a flawed 1,600-foot sewer pipeline, as six-party mediation talks to assess responsibility for the problem continue.

The main lines along Route 611 are in place and steps are being taken for residents and businesses to hook in. But that won't happen for at least 90 days — the required legal notice for businesses and residents.

At issue is a 1,600-foot line section near Learn Road that bowed upward by six or seven feet. The result is gravity can't carry sewage beyond that point, meaning sewage would back up.

Negotiations to decide who is financially responsible for rebuilding the unusable gravity line near Learn Road and Bulger's Run continue even as the township works to get the \$75 million centralized township sewage system online.

The township's consulting engineer, R.K.R. Hess Associates, says Linde Corp. deviated from design specifications when — using subcontractor Gabe's Construction of Sheboygan, Wis. — it bore horizontally into the ground to install the line. Linde, based in Wayne County, says Hess' design specs are to blame for misidentifying what turned out to be unstable ground.

The township withheld \$1.1 million that Linde had put up as collateral. Linde submitted a \$3.9 million bill for what it called Hess' design flaw and an \$899,000 bill primarily for lost work days it said was due to those designs.

The parties vowed last June to fight it out in court. But they eventually agreed to mediation before Howard Venzie of the law firm Venzie, Phillips & Warshawer. One session has been held and another is planned for late July.

Township consulting attorney John Rice asked the supervisors Tuesday to authorize the redesign ahead of the next mediation session, so the parties have a better idea of what needs to be done to rebuild the flawed section and how much it will cost.

"The goal is to have something probably in three weeks — prior to the mediation — something we can put a number on," Rice said. "That line has to be fixed one way or another."

An additional property easement might be needed for the new design, Rice added.