



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

May 10, 1990

OFFICE OF  
SOLID WASTE AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Mr. Mark M. Woodall  
Georgia Cushion & Wrapper Company  
P.O. Box 299  
Woodland, GA 31836

Dear Mr. Woodall:

In response to your inquiry, I know of no commercial hazardous waste management facility where the local citizens have not organized to try to close the facility, and I doubt if there are any. It is my observation that the heart of their discontent seems to be that promises that were made to them before the facility was built have not been kept.

In my opinion, the best way to learn about what it is like having a commercial hazardous waste management facility in your neighborhood is to ask the people who already have one, rather than relying on what you are being told by the promoters of the facility. In recent contacts with citizens who oppose their local commercial hazardous waste management facility, I asked the following four questions regarding promises that were made by those promoting the facility:

1. Has the site attracted industrial growth?
2. Has it created new jobs?
3. Has the state assured responsible operation?
4. What other benefits or dis-benefits have there been to the community?

The responses to this little survey are attached.

I make no claims for the scientific accuracy of such a small survey, especially since it was taken from people who are actively opposed to the site. However, this survey does confirm the impression I've formed in the sixteen years I've been involved with hazardous waste management. That is, that commercial hazardous waste management facilities do not bring

about industrial growth. Rather they tend to depress any area in which they are located, from the point of view of economics, public health, the environment, and morale.

Sincerely yours,

/s/

William Sanjour

attachments

DR. VASAN  
(501) 863-8025

MD cancer specialist, Board Certified Radiology Oncologist,  
Member of the American Society of Radiology Oncologists.

Ensco incinerator, El Dorado, Arkansas

Question 1: Has the site attracted industrial growth?

Answer: No. The incinerator actually causes prospective businesses to shy away.

Question 2: Has it created new jobs?

Answer: Ensco employs about 90 low level people in EI Dorado,  
~however the management all lives in Little Rock.

Question 3: Has the state assured responsible operation?

Answer: No one cares about what Ensco is doing. The state authorities say it would cost \$300,000 to monitor the site full time and they can't afford it. As an example of state enforcement, a state inspector found that manifest showed they were burning dioxin without a permit. Ensco said the manifest was in error and it wasn't dioxin. That was the end of it. Dr. Vasan knows of at least three state or federal regulatory officials who were hired by Ensco. One of the Ensco shift managers was a federal EPA inspector. No matter how many new cases of cancer and other diseases are found in the community, the state health authorities never have enough data to want to do anything. It is widely believed that politicians were bought off.

Question 4: What other benefits or dis-benefits have there been to the community?

Answer: There is a high rate of cancer in the community. For a population of 50,000 one would expect 43 cases of cancer. El Dorado has 118. There are six cases of Guillian-Barre syndrome where you would expect none. There are nine or ten brain tumors where there should be none. These data was collected by the local citizens, not by the health authorities.

Other Comments: Ensco takes waste from allover U.S., also Canada, Mexico, and Puerto Rico. Community is 50% black and poor. This small community will soon need another cancer specialist.

CORINNE WHITEHEAD  
(502) 527-1217

Retired school teacher, Past state President League of Women Voters, Appointed by Governor to chair Task Force on Earthquake Hazards Reduction.

Liquid Waste Disposal (LWD) incinerator, Calvert city, Kentucky

Question 1: Has the site attracted industrial growth?

Answer: LWD has been a detriment to industrial growth. Air pollution is bad. No new plants have been sited. The smell is bad for tourism

Question 2: Has it created new jobs?

Answer: LWD claims to employ 300 people but it is probably more like 100 to 120. They use a lot of high school dropouts and otherwise unemployable people. Employees are not well trained and they are misinformed about the hazards of the material they are working with.

Question 3: Has the state assured responsible operation?

Answer: No. The head of state waste management authority, Don Harker, was fired when he tried to deny a permit to LWD because of their bad record. There are several former state employees working for LWD. One state inspector came out to investigate an explosion and ended up working for LWD. One state regulator, who is in charge of environmental testing, has a son working for LWD. One state senator and his son work for a firm which does consulting and testing for LWD. The same senator gutted the waste management regulations. until very recently there has been no monitoring of toxic air pollution in the community.

Question 4: What other benefits or dis-benefits have there been to the community?

Answer: LWD donated a truck to the town. There is a high incidence of children born with brain tumors and cancer. There is a high incidence of melanoma and leukemia. LWD got sued for non-payment of taxes in 1989. Homeowners insurance won't pay for chemical damage.

FLORENCE ROBINSON  
(504) 775-0341

Assistant Professor of Biology at Southern University

Rollins incinerator at Alsen, Louisiana

Question 1: Has the site attracted industrial growth?

Answer: There has been no industrial growth as a result of the incinerator. Most of the waste is from out of state. Other local industries have filed complaints against Rollins because of odors from the incinerator.

Question 2: Has it created new jobs?

Answer: Rollins employs about 50 people. The local people are all in the lower echelons and are mostly high school dropouts. They are paid very well, 40 to 50 thousand dollars, but they aren't well trained in safety and they don't understand the hazards they are dealing with.

Question 3: Has the state assured responsible operation?

Answer: No. Three years ago, Pat Norton, the Secretary of the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) tried to shut down Rollins because of numerous violations. She was fired within days and the plant remained open. The DEQ has fined Rollins on numerous occasions but they never pay. They are allowed to negotiate a much smaller settlement. There is no permanent on-site inspector. Most complaints are from citizens calling DEQ about odors. It is difficult to reach DEQ and they are often treated rudely. Typically, when DEQ investigates a complaint, they will tell Rollins they are coming and Rollins will shut down the plant so that the inspector finds no basis for the complaint.

Question 4: What other benefits or dis-benefits have there been to the community?

Answer: After losing a lawsuit to the community, Rollins made several contributions including a fire truck, street lights, and an addition to the recreation center, and cash payments to local citizens in exchange for a waiver of immunity. There are frequent complaints of obnoxious odors. Sometimes they cause vomiting, sometimes a rash. Other symptoms include eye or lung irritation. These effects can be felt several miles away. Ash has covered garden vegetables causing illness to the people who ate them. There have been three cancer deaths in one block of nine houses. Two children in one family came down with cancer. In January of this year there were sixteen people from Alsen being treated for cancer. A health survey conducted in 1980 showed that 80% of the population suffered from headaches,

respiratory ailments, and sinus problems. An recent survey conducted by Prof. Robinson showed that 21% of the community suffered from asthma as compared with 7% from a control group. There have been several spills on rural highways from the eighteen wheelers carrying hazard waste and several cases of trucks turning over on the interstate. Groundwater has been polluted and Rollins discharges into a tributary of the Mississippi.

Other comments from Prof. Robinson:

The community of Alsen is poor, rural and 95% black. Prof. Robinson said that "Rollins is a company without a conscience" and offered the following examples to illustrate her point.

Rollins was knowingly polluting groundwater for a year and a half before it did anything about it. The pollution has now traveled a half mile from its source.

Rollins was turned down by DEQ for a permit to build a shredder. They built it anyway. Two contract workers building the shredder were badly injured by chemicals at the plant which burned out their lungs and left them permanently crippled. Rollins did not report the accident to DEQ. They nevertheless continued to advertise that they had no accidents on site.

Wastes from DuPont were shipped to Rollins with the written warning that they must be treated on Rollins' site. Nevertheless Rollins mixed the DuPont wastes with waste oil and sent it to an Ashland oil Co. refinery in Kentucky. It blew up the Ashland plant.

A local environmentalist came out with a report which "raked Rollins over the coals". They unsuccessfully tried to shut her up by offering her a high paying job as Public Relations Director.

SEN. LIVENTIS  
(803) 773 0884

State senator and businessman

GSX landfill, Sumter County, South Carolina

Question 1: Has the site attracted industrial growth?

Answer: There has been no industrial growth. After ten years, Sen. Liventis knows of no new firms. Less than 10% of waste comes from South Carolina and this hasn't changed in ten years.

Question 2: Has it created new jobs?

~ Answer: GSX employs 40 or 50 people. There have been no other new jobs locally, but GSX employs nine lobbyists in Columbia.

Question 3: Has the state assured responsible operation?

Answer: Absolutely not! Regulators leave and go to work for GSX. Sen. Liventis knows of at least six. One was in charge of the site inspectors at the state environmental agency (DHEC). Every GSX site manager has come from DHEC.

Question 4: What other benefits or dis-benefits have there been to the community?

Answer: The GSX facility has been a net cost to the community due to heavy traffic and declining land values.

KAY KIKER  
(205) 392-7443

Recipient of President's Volunteer Action Award from President Reagan in 1988.

Waste Management Inc. (WMI) landfill in Emelle, Alabama

Question 1: Has the site attracted industrial growth?

Answer: 1. No, there has been no industrial growth. The community has lost ten industries and no one has moved in because of the site. Two thousand people have left the county.

Question 2: Has it created new jobs?

Answer: The site employs four hundred people. About 2500 jobs have been lost because of lost industry. The county now has 21% unemployment, one of the highest unemployment rates in the country.

Question 3: Has the state assured responsible operation?

Answer: Absolutely not! There have been lots of violations including illegal disposal of dioxins and radioactive materials. Most violations are detected by the local citizens rather than the state regulatory agency. state on-site inspectors are paid by funds from the facility. Many former state and federal officials are working for the landfill.

Question 4: What other benefits or dis-benefits have there been to the community?

Answer: The landfill pays \$5 per ton to county. Since most other industry has left, the county has become a "company town". Funds from WMI pays for the mayor's salary, the library, etc.. School taxes have gone up. Unemployment has gone from 5% to 21%. Real estate value have dropped. For example the bank appraisal on the mayor's house went from \$50,000 in 1984 to \$15,000 in 1986. The community is dispirited.

LIZ NATTER  
(502) 875-2428 or 875-3430

Attorney, former Branch Manager in the Kentucky Department of Law at the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection (NREP) Cabinet

Ms. Natter, experienced in state enforcement, addressed question 3 "has the state assured responsible operation?" She says that anyone who says the state will take care of you or that the state can assure responsible operation, is misleading the public because in her experience:

1. There are limited state funds and a limited number of inspectors.
2. By and large the state depends on self-reporting by the waste management company and reporting by citizens.
3. There is no measurement of air quality in the community, i.e. no one is measuring what the public actually breaths.
4. Emissions are determined by calculations using data supplied by the company.
5. The waste management company doesn't analyze the waste from every barrel of waste coming into the plant. It depends on the generators word. Therefore illegal wastes such as dioxins and PCBs can get in.
6. The inspection system encourages "bean counting" rather than rigorous investigation.
7. The plant is very complex and inspectors are dependent on the company to tell them what is going on.

Ms. Natter also points out that former employees of the state regulatory agency (KDNREP) work for LWD including a former inspector and a former permit writer. She also says that prosecutors may avoid going after companies with good political connections because it's a waste of their time