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ISSUES AT FERNALD

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LETTER

**Westinghouse
Materials Company
of Ohio**

1960
PO Box 398704
Cincinnati, Ohio 45239-8704
(513) 738 6200

WMCO:CR:90-011

January 11, 1990

Frank Marriott
Westinghouse Electric Corporation
1801 K. Street NW
Suite 800
Washington, DC 20006

ISSUES AT FERNALD

Dear Frank:

This is in response to your request for information about the RCRA program at FMPC and the recent controversy about a high reading in a monitoring well.

The number one priority for WMCO in 1990 is improved management of hazardous waste and compliance with environmental regulations.

A number of activities were accelerated in 1989 to assure compliance with Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) regulations regarding the storage and handling of hazardous waste. Newly-configured hazardous waste accumulation areas, were established at several locations throughout the facility, and procedures have been established for regular and frequent inspections. Hazardous waste storage buildings have been refurbished and one newly-constructed warehouse was placed into service incorporating state-of-the-art security, emergency equipment, and environmental protection features.

Drums of hazardous waste are relabeled and repackaged as necessary to alleviate drum deterioration and prevent leakage as needed. In addition, a temporary impermeable liner was completed over Waste Pit 4, which contains RCRA materials, to prevent leaching of contaminants into the aquifer which underlies the FMPC.

Closure of the FMPC waste pits has resulted in the accumulation of low-level radioactive waste from processing activities in drums stored on concrete pads. An ongoing program to ship this waste to an approved DOE burial facility has been extremely effective in reducing the amount of waste stored at the FMPC. WMCO shipped 57,000 drum equivalents of waste off site in FY 1989, bringing the total reduction in waste inventory to 177,420 since the program began with a trickle in 1985.

We have no place to treat or ship the RCRA waste, so the only option available to us is storing it.

In September 1989, to allow the FMPC to continue to handle and store RCRA material, WMC0 submitted a completed RCRA Part B and revised Part A application to the DOE site office for signature and subsequent transmittal to the Ohio and US EPA. The permits are required to be signed by the owner and operator of the site. Since DOE is the owner and primary operator, they have signed all previous permits. Due to concerns over personal liability no individual within DOE is now willing to sign the permit applications, and on September 22, 1989, DOE forwarded the UNsigned application to the EPA.

The EPA has not taken any action on the permit, but is aware that it was submitted unsigned. Informal communications indicate that the EPA intends to take some action in the near future. It is possible that the unsigned permit will be treated as though no permit has been submitted. The Consent Decree between the State of Ohio and DOE states that "DOE shall not store or dispose of hazardous or mixed waste at any FMPC locations, or treat any such waste at the FMPC in any devices, not included in the permit application or subsequent revisions submitted to the Ohio EPA." Without EPA acceptance of the revised permit application, Westinghouse and DOE would potentially be subject to further Notices of Violation, additional fines and/or an attempt to shut down all RCRA related activities on the site until such time as a signed permit application is submitted.

The recent controversy over the high reading in the monitoring well was a classic case of lack of coordination of RI/FS data by DOE.

WMC0 is not the RI/FS contractor and not responsible for monitoring the wells or reporting the data to anyone except the FMPC Advisory Committee. We reported the data to the Advisory Committee on December 14. The independent Advisory Committee included the information in the news release.

At issue is a single sample taken from an RI/FS monitoring well on site. The first four rounds of sampling showed the well with high concentration of uranium, 200-300 ppb of uranium.

The fifth round of sampling showed the well had 851 ppb of uranium.

It appears that these variations are related to current rainwater recharge which causes the direction in which the existing groundwater uranium plume moves to change during part of the year. The variations do not appear to result from current FMPC operations. The recharge water would be from current rainfall which would not contain any significant amounts of uranium because new surface runoff controls have been installed at the FMPC. Additional wells have been proposed to refine our understanding of the groundwater flow patterns in the area.

Media accounts made it appear that it was a new find from a new source of contamination and that the plume of contamination was spreading. None of that was factual.

Frank Marriott

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On January 8, we met with DOE & ASI management, ASI is the RI/FS contractor, and it was made clear who has what responsibility for reporting RI/FS data. The responsibility belongs to ASI and DOE, not Westinghouse.



Pete Kelley, Manager
Community Relations

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