

*fix my  
our fence  
machine is down  
(as usual) - 1/11/87  
you my one & only  
JR*

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# STATE OF COLORADO

HEALTH

500 FEB 2 1987  
ROCKY FLATS



Koy Römer  
Governor

Thomas M. Vernon, M.D.  
Executive Director

January 27, 1987



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Letter to the Editor:

Recent articles in the news have given the public a misperception of the true involvement of this Department in oversight and monitoring of the "burning" of plutonium at Rocky Flats.

The Radiation Control program has been actively involved at Rocky Flats since 1969. Included in our oversight since 1970 is the process by which small metal chips generated from the formation of a plutonium part are converted in reduction furnaces to a chemically inert form of plutonium by controlled combustion. Emissions from these reduction furnaces are monitored for radioactivity in the stacks by Rocky Flats personnel and the results are reported to the public each month at the monthly exchange meetings. Levels of radioactivity are and have been well below any applicable standard, and our staff carefully watch any trends in such emissions.

While this oversight by Radiation Control is not a permit system (which is precluded by the Atomic Energy Act) it nevertheless provides tight control of radioactive emissions and full disclosure to the public.

In addition to the oversight by Radiation Control personnel, the reduction furnaces are regulated by the Air Pollution Control Division. Air emissions permits for particulates were issued in 1982, with public notice. Should the proposed emissions or the materials to be combusted change, the permits would have to be amended by a process which would include a public comment procedure.

We hope these comments reassure the public that the plutonium "burning" process is carefully monitored and the results are regularly reported in a public meeting.

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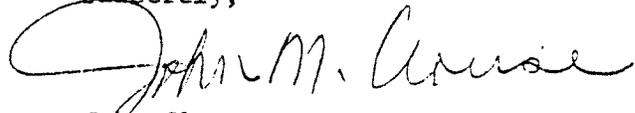
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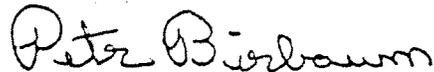
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On our common agenda now is the proposal by Rocky Flats to carry out a trial burn of hazardous and mixed radioactive wastes. This small burn would demonstrate whether the incinerators will achieve the standards of the Hazardous Materials Division's regulations for destruction and emissions. The Hazardous Materials Division is now requesting public comment on the trial burn proposal. The Department will not take a positive or negative position on that proposal until all comment is in.

Sincerely,



John Clouse  
Air Pollution Control Division



Peter Bierbaum  
Hazardous Materials Division



Albert J. Hazle  
Radiation Control Division

cc: Dr. Vernon