

# Rocky Mountain Peace and Justice Center

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May 12, 1998

Mr. Ed Helminski, Publisher  
*Weapons Complex Monitor*  
1826 Jefferson Place, NW, Suite 100  
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Mr. Helminski:

On May 6 David C. Shelton of Kaiser-Hill wrote you challenging statements I had made to the *Monitor* about the Actinide Migration Studies under way at Rocky Flats.

Iggy Litaor, the scientist who discovered significant migration of plutonium in the soil at Rocky Flats in May 1995, was dismissed by Kaiser-Hill over the objections of those who called for his retention because of the significance of his findings not only for Rocky Flats but for all plutonium-contaminated sites anywhere. Litaor's findings flew in the face of Kaiser-Hill's plan for a rapid cleanup of Rocky Flats. When asked about Litaor's dismissal at the October 1995 meeting of the Rocky Flats Citizens Advisory Board, a Kaiser-Hill manager said he had been retained with full funding. One month later Board members learned that they had been lied to. Meanwhile, a review of Litaor's work commissioned by Kaiser-Hill faulted him mainly for not studying chemical speciation of plutonium. Litaor pointed to 18 key documents Kaiser-Hill had not given the reviewers and called for a new review. He received no reply. The texts of this review and of Litaor's rebuttal were not made available to the interested public.

Mr. Shelton says that almost all plutonium specialists in the country work for DOE at some time. This is true, but Litaor was rare in that he won public confidence, with his fierce independence and his record of publishing numerous articles on his Rocky Flats research in peer-reviewed journals. His dismissal just when his work challenged Rocky Flats cleanup plans thus raised a red flag to the concerned public. The scientists with whom he was replaced may be prestigious, but it was Litaor and not them who found significant plutonium migration in the soil at Rocky Flats. The results from their work so far look like more of the conventional wisdom that Litaor effectively challenged.

Mr. Shelton says I over-interpreted researcher Bruce Honeyman's statements at an August 20, 1997, meeting to the effect that over 90% of the plutonium in the Rocky Flats soil was chemically in organic form, the form in which it could most readily become soluble and thus be susceptible to transport. If Mr. Shelton will review the verbatim notes from that meeting he will see that this is precisely what Mr. Honeyman said. Asked by someone in the audience, "Does this preliminary finding mean that the plutonium is going to move offsite in the long-term?," Honeyman replied, "Yes, but additional work is needed to determine the rate of movement." When he later offered the more orthodox view of plutonium's relative stability in soil some members of the public thought he had been reined in.

**ADMIN RECORD**

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One last point. Mr. Shelton says "all work plans and results" from the Actinide Migration Studies at Rocky Flats have been shared with the public. There is a difference between being a spectator and a participant. In this situation, what we need is public oversight.

Yours truly,



LeRoy Moore

P.S. The enclosed paper closely documents everything I said to the *Monitor*.

cc: David C. Shelton, Kaiser-Hill  
Christine Dayton, Kaiser-Hill  
Steve Gunderson, CDPHE  
Tim Rehder, EPA  
Mary Harlow, City of Westminster  
Hank Stovall, City of Broomfield  
Carol Lyons, City of Arvada  
Joe Legare, DOE/RFFO  
Niels Schonbeck, Metro State  
Rocky Flats Citizens Advisory Board  
Rocky Flats Local Impacts Initiative  
Rocky Flats Radionuclides Soil Action Levels Oversight Panel  
Chris Logan, *Weapons Complex Monitor*