

NY 38-2

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To: File

From: A. Wallo ~~aww~~

Subject: FUSRAP review of the former International Rare Metals site in Mt. Kisco New York.

The former International Rare Metals Refinery in Mt. Kisco, NY began operations in the early 1940's. Throughout its operation and in various correspondence it has also been known as "Pregel's Mt. Kisco Refinery" and most recently, the Canadian Radium and Uranium Corporation site.

During the Manhattan Engineer District (MED) era, the federal government through the MED, purchased uranium from foreign sources, African ores and Canadian ores. The largest part of the uranium in the early years were derived from the African ores. The contracts were only for the uranium in these ores. The agreements provided that all of the other valuable elements in the ore remained the property of the owner. As a result of these agreements, the ores were processed for uranium by the MED and also for other elements such as radium, for the owner of the ores, African Metals Corp., by independent refineries. In later years, when there was less of a market for the radium and other materials, the residues were stored by the Government for the owners. The MED history and correspondence identifies the former International Rare Metals Refinery as a site involved in the extraction of radium from these ores or residues for African Metals.

The facility began extracting radium from the African ore uranium sludges as early as 1943. It processed the material throughout the 1940's and apparently into the 1950's. Radium from the operations were sold to the U.S. Government as well as Great Britain and apparently commercially. It appears the MED was using the radium as a radioactive source.

The 1948 and 1949 "Minerals Year Books" identified International Rare Metals as a commercial supplier of radium and polonium and indicated the materials were distributed by Canadian Radium and Uranium Co. In 1951 and 1952 the Atomic Energy Commission Health and Safety Division participated in surveys at or near the site. The records regarding these surveys indicate that the AEC had no jurisdiction over the site but were involved in one case to assist the New York State Department of Labor and in the other case to evaluate removal efficiency for radium of a standard sewage treatment plant.

Information obtained from EPA files indicates that the facility continued operations (primarily radium recovery from instruments and watch dials) into the 1960's. A decontamination effort was completed in 1966 and was coordinated by the State and Westchester County and supported by the U.S. Public Health Service. In 1979, as a result of a press investigation,

additional surveys were conducted by the county which identified elevated levels of radiation. These survey results were forwarded to the New York Departments of Health and Environmental Conservation. The current status of the site is not known. Contacts with EPA headquarters and Region II indicated the site is not on the CERCLA data base.

There is no authority for the Department of Energy to include this site in its FUSRAP effort. The site was a commercial operation not under the jurisdiction of DOE predecessor agencies. Based on the limited historical material available on the site it appears the site is under the regulatory jurisdiction of the State of New York and Westchester County. The material clearly indicates that these authorities as well as EPA are aware of the site and its status; however, there is no indication that these agencies have considered the local sewage treatment plant in their evaluations. Therefore, while there is probably limited potential for exposure due to residues at a treatment plant, it is advisable that EPA and the State be notified of the possibility of radium residues at the sewage treatment plant as part of the final action eliminating this site from further consideration under FUSRAP.