George Kargbaum

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection

Rachel Carson State Office Building
P.O. Box 8469
Harrisburg, PA 17105-8469
August 27, 2002

Bureau of Radiation Protection 717-772-2724

Dale Jakoby, Plant Superintendent
Royersford Wastewater Treatment Facility
Borough of Royersford
300 Main Street
P.O. Box 188
Royersford, PA 19468

Dear Mr. Jakoby:

The Department of Environmental Protection (Department) is sensitive to the quandary posed by the presence of residual radioactivity in the Royersford Wastewater Treatment Facility (RWTF) reed bed, in filter cake and in sludge resulting from wastewater treatment process at your facility. I understand that the Borough of Royersford (Borough) has limited financial resources available for disposal of this waste and that the Borough has expressed an interest in the possibility of disposing of all or some of the waste in a Pennsylvania municipal or residual waste disposal facility.

I have recently met with management representatives for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) to discuss a similar situation that exists at another wastewater treatment plant in Pennsylvania. At that meeting I clarified Pennsylvania's policy on the disposal of radioactive materials in Pennsylvania solid waste disposal facilities. Since this policy applies equally to the RWTF, I have summarized it below in the hopes that it will aid you in the development of a plan for ultimate disposition of the contaminated material at your facility.

As you are probably aware, Pennsylvanian's are extremely sensitive to matters dealing with radioactivity, largely as a result of the accident at the Three Mile Island nuclear generating station. Pennsylvania has recently revised the regulations that address the handling, treatment and disposal of solid waste to specifically address restrictions on radioactive material that may be present in waste. The revised regulations establish radiation monitoring requirements, action plan development requirements, and specific prohibitions including disposal of waste containing radioactive material generated from activities governed by a radioactive materials license. The exception to this would be short-lived radioactivity resulting from medical patients.

While it is understood that the Borough is not conducting its operations under a nuclear materials license, the radioactivity present at the facility exists in licensable quantities. Indeed, if not for the unique scenario of the material being reconcentrated in the RWTF, it would no doubt be licensed. As such, reed bed soil, filter cake, sludge, etc., containing above-background concentrations of radioactivity

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would be considered technically as low-level radioactive waste and therefore prohibited from disposal at a Pennsylvania solid waste disposal facility.

I have instructed the Department's Bureau of Radiation Protection to continue to work closely with you and the lead regulatory agency (i.e., the Nuclear Regulatory Commission) to help find a solution to the problem and I remain confident that options exist that will be satisfactory to all stakeholders. In particular, the generator of the radioactivity (i.e., UniTech Services Group, Inc.) should assist in the financial burden of the RWTF decontamination. Indeed, if Pennsylvania were to perform the work, we would likely pursue all potentially responsible parties (PRPs).

If you have any questions concerning this matter, please contact David J. Allard, Director, or Robert Maiers in our Bureau of Radiation Protection at 717-787-2480.

Sincerely,

Robert J. Barkanic
Deputy Secretary for
Air, Recycling and Radiation Protection

cc: D. Allard
D. Hogeman
J. Feola
R. Maiers
I. Shanbaky
J. Kopenhaver
J. Yusko
George Pangburn, NRC Region 1

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