



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
REGION III
788 ROOSEVELT ROAD
GLEN ELLYN, ILLINOIS 60137

DEC 6 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR: Region III Files

THRU: *CJP* C. J. Paperiello, Chief, Materials Radiological
Protection Section No. 1

FROM: R. E. Burgin, Radiation Specialist

SUBJECT: ALPHA SURVEY OF HOMES IN WEST CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Mrs. Charles Wenk, 135 Sophia St., West Chicago, Illinois (312/231-3793) called RIII on November 1, 1979, to request that an NRC inspector come to her home to survey an I-beam purchased for her basement. The beam purportedly came from the Kerr-McGee site in West Chicago.

On November 2, 1979, I drove to the Wenk residence and talked to Mrs. Wenk. She stated that the beam in question had been purchased in 1973 thru Mr. Mike Auer, a former employee of Kerr-McGee.

I surveyed the Wenk home and the exposed beam (using Eberline PAC-ISAGA, #000713, calibrated 7/29/79). All readings were background levels (<100 cpm). Six swipes were taken along the exposed beam and counted at the RIII lab for gross beta-gamma and gross alpha. All smears showed up clean.

I contacted Mr. Auer concerning the actual location of the beam prior to delivery to Mrs. Wenk. Mr. Auer stated the beam had come from his own stock, and not from the Kerr-McGee plan (Mr. Auer stated he wasn't even employed by Kerr-McGee until 1976).

I phoned Mrs. Wenk on November 6, 1979, to report our smear results. Her son took the message that the beam was clean, and that it was now understood that the beam had not come from the Kerr-McGee site.

Mrs. Wenk's concern was apparently heightened by a Chicago Tribune article (October 29, 1979) pin-pointing "radioactive hotspots" in West Chicago. The article concerned a survey performed by Argonne National Laboratory for the NRC in September 1978. The levels reported for Mrs. Wenk's neighborhood were in the range of 100 micro-rem/hr (10 mr/year). I surveyed Mrs. Wenk's yard and two others in the neighborhood (121, 127, and 135 Sophia St.). I also explained that such small levels could not be seen on a portable survey meter. I believe Mrs. Wenk was satisfied with the results of all surveys and smears taken.

Robert E. Burgin

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Radiation Specialist

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EXHIBIT III