

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION

Date: November 17, 1980

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE--PNO-I-80- 167

This preliminary notification constitutes EARLY notice of events of POSSIBLE safety or public interest significance. The information presented is as initially received without verification or evaluation and is basically all that is known by IE staff on this date.

Location: Undeveloped Land  
Rochelle Park  
New Jersey

Subject: RADIOACTIVE MATERIAL IN AN UNRESTRICTED AREA

On September 29, 1980 the New Jersey State Department of Environmental Protection received a letter from a concerned citizen alleging he had found radioactive contamination in an area near Route 17 in Rochelle Park, New Jersey. Survey and soil sample analysis by the New Jersey State Department of Environmental Protection on October 8, 1980 and October 20, 1980 respectively confirm the presence of radioactive contamination in the form of thorium-232 and radium-226 in the soil samples. On November 5, 1980 Region I was informed by the New Jersey Bureau of Radiation Protection concerning their findings at this site. On November 13, 1980 two regional inspectors met with New Jersey State Bureau of Radiation Protection personnel at the involved site and proceeded to make radiation surveys and take soil samples. The inspectors obtained instrument readings of 1.0-3.5 millirem per hour at ground level throughout the involved area. Visual inspection of soil samples indicated the presence of a compacted white material approximately one inch below the surface of the ground. The soil samples were returned to the regional laboratory for further analysis. Inspectors estimate that an area of approximately 200,000 square feet is involved. This area is bounded on the south by a commercial distribution firm, on the east by a chemical processing plant (Stepan Chemical Co., an NRC licensee, who has buried natural thorium on their property), on the north by railroad tracks and on the west by a field which adjoins private residential properties. The contamination appears to be confined to an area within one hundred feet of either side of Route 17. The concerned citizen states that children use this area for riding trail bikes. A "No Trespassing" sign was posted at the south entrance to the site. New Jersey personnel stated that two local newspaper reporters and two individuals from the office of U.S. Congressman McGuire were present during the initial site visit on October 8, 1980. Region I and the State of New Jersey are not aware of any news stories written as a result of this visit.

Region I received notification of this occurrence by telephone from the New Jersey Bureau of Radiation Protection on November 5, 1980 at 10:04 AM.

Region I will issue a press release when we are ready to announce an investigation of this matter.

Contact: John Kinneman (FTS 488-1206)

8011250535

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DISTRIBUTION: (Facsimile Transmission Times Noted)

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 Commissioner Gilinsky  
 Commissioner Bradford  
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 G. W. Kerr, OSP  
 H. K. Shapar, ELD

IE:XOOS 4:30  
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 Office 4:30

Region II 4:30  
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PHILLIPS BLDG 9:10 AM  
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WILLSTE BLDG 8:35 AM  
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RI Resident Sites  
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LANDOW BLDG (Fax by HQ)  
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