



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20555

November 29, 1990

The Honorable Mary Rose Oakar
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congresswoman Oakar:

This is in response to your letter dated October 15, 1990, to former Chairman Lando W. Zech, Jr., regarding your constituent's concern about an industrial dump site in Newburgh Heights, Ohio. Your information is correct that there are large volumes of radioactively contaminated soil at the Bert Avenue site in Newburgh Heights, and that site is bordered by residential properties and a public playground. The piles of soil were created earlier this year by the licensee, Chemetron Corporation, during preliminary decontamination efforts. Evaluations of the contaminated soil have shown the levels of radioactivity to be sufficiently low to be of minimal health and safety concern, and the chemical and physical form of the material, depleted uranium, impedes its spread. Routine monitoring has confirmed that radioactive contamination has not spread.

The NRC has been inspecting this facility over the last 10 years to ensure, among other things, that site security is adequately maintained. Recently, the licensee apprehended two juveniles trespassing on the site. The individuals were not contaminated with radioactive materials; however, concern was raised regarding the security of the site. The NRC performed a special inspection at the site. Weak areas in the perimeter fence around the Bert Avenue site have been identified. Interim repairs have been made and 24-hour security guard coverage of the site has been implemented. Our inspection also determined the site perimeter was adequately posted as a radiation hazard; nevertheless, we recommended additional posting to enhance visibility. The licensee is currently reevaluating the entire perimeter fence and posting and will upgrade the site boundary security.

In addition, after discovery of a greater volume of contaminated soil than anticipated, the licensee has proposed to conduct a detailed site characterization to more accurately identify the extent of contamination at this site. The results of this effort would be factored into a decision on the appropriate techniques to be employed in site cleanup. We are planning to meet with the licensee during the week of December 3 to discuss scheduling of that decision. Subsequently, the NRC will review the licensee's detailed plans and maintain oversight of the decontamination including confirmatory surveys to assure that the site has been satisfactorily decontaminated.

We have recently received a request from the Mayor of the Village of Newburgh Heights to participate in a public meeting to inform the residents of the hazards associated with the Bert Avenue dump and the ongoing efforts to decontaminate the site. We are working with the Mayor to schedule a public meeting involving the Village, the licensee and NRC staff. We would be glad to inform Andy Fedynsky of your district office staff in Cleveland, Ohio when the date for the public meeting is finalized.

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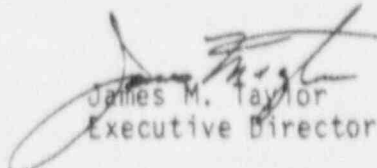
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The Honorable Mary Rose Oakar

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I hope this is responsive to your request.

Sincerely,



James M. Taylor
Executive Director for Operations



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*See previous concurrences

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