



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

April 13, 1977

License No. STA-583

MEMORANDUM FOR: Region III Files

THRU: G. T. Lonergan, Chief, Materials Radiological
Protection Section

FROM: C. T. Oberg, Radiation Specialist

SUBJECT: KERR-MC GEE CHEMICAL CORPORATION,
WEST CHICAGO, ILLINOIS
BRIEF TOUR OF FACILITY BY REGION III, IE INSPECTOR,
SUBSEQUENT TO AN INFORMATION TELEPHONE CALL ADVISING
OF APPARENT OPERATIONS IN PROGRESS AT THE FACILITY

Late in the day on April 6, 1977, the NRC, Region III offices received a telephone call from Mr. M. Meyer of the DuPage County Health Department. This telephone call was made to inform the NRC that there was an apparent logging operation going on at the subject licensee's site; trees were being cut into fire place lengths and stacked. Also apparent garbage was being covered with debris. This message was relayed to the MRPS Section for follow-up. RIII MRPS personnel attempted to contact, by telephone, the subject licensee personnel at the facility to question them with respect to any operations in progress but received no answer because of the hour of the day (4:35 p.m.).

On April 7, 1977, RIII, MRPS personnel contacted Mr. Meyer to obtain further details. He stated that one of his people had been to the subject facility and had observed the logs stacked and that from what they observed, someone may be hauling material in (to the waste area) and burying it. The RIII personnel explained that the licensee had been requested by the NRC to cut a five (5) foot clear zone exterior to the fence and that this was completed about the first of the year (1977). At that time, the cuttings had been brought into the waste area, the logs stacked and the brush stacked in piles.

The County Health personnel stated that it looked like some other material also. He was then informed that a shed/garage belonging to another party, along side of the licensee's fence was also razed by the licensee by agreement and with permission of the owner because of

April 13, 1977

mutual trespass and vandalism resulting from the proximity of the building to the fence. After further discussion about the subject licensee and the contracted purchaser of the licensee's property, unrelated to the information transmitted, Mr. Meyer stated that the County would check further and get back to RIII.

On April 7, 1977, an NRC, Region III, IE inspector made a brief tour of the subject licensee's West Chicago, Illinois, Rare Earth Plant in a continuing effort to maintain cognizance of the status of the facility and to follow-up on the information communicated as identified in the proceeding paragraphs.

The Action Items (AI) No. 1 through 4, as agreed to by the licensee in their letter dated November 30, 1976, appear to remain satisfied.

With respect to the progress of AI No. 5, the licensee's site representative stated that Kerr-McGee had received a bid to remove and transfer the high radiation material from the waste area to a commercial waste disposal site. He further stated that the licensee is presently preparing an "Approval for Expenditure" to be submitted for the cost of the transfer.

The RIII inspector determined from this tour that no significant changes in the waste site have occurred and that no significant operations were in progress. The logging operation discussed was the result of the clear zone preparations at the first of the year (see RIII File memo dated January 17, 1977). The other material brought into the waste area was, in fact, the rubble and debris resulting from the shed/garage razing (see RIII File memo dated January 25, 1977). During this tour, licensee personnel were observed making repairs to the waste area perimeter fence. Discussion with this individual revealed that vandals had broken off the stranded barbed wire supports along the top of the fence and has also torn the fencing away from a support post to gain access to the interior of the waste area. This vandalism had apparently occurred over the first weekend in April.

When questioned about operations and possible burying operations progressing within the waste area by either the licensee or contracted purchaser of the property, the site representatives informed the inspector that two tote bins had been moved into a shed and maintenance work performed on the shed. The tote bins, which had been located on the grounds of the waste area and included in the comprehensive radiation survey performed by the contracted H. P. company (ATCOR), were found to contain residue of significantly high radiation.

This plus the vandalism of the fence, indicative of individuals trespassing onto the radioactive waste area and possibly jeopardizing their personal health and safety, prompted the licensee's representatives to move the tote bins inside one of the waste storage sheds on the property, board-up accessible openings and ascertain that the shed was securely locked to inhibit entry. No other operations have been in progress except for replacing the radiation hazard signs on the fence, which, from time to time, were being stolen. Personnel have estimated that about 50 of these signs have been stolen and replaced to date.

During further discussions, the RIII inspector was informed that the analytical results of the borings made at the site have been delayed because of prolonged illness of the ANL individual assigned to perform the analyses. Another individual from ANL has been assigned this task and has been at the site to obtain information necessary for the proper analyses and evaluation of the samples and data. The final results may not be available for two or three more months.

During this tour, the inspector observed that radioactive warning signs have been installed on the fencing around the plant area as it is on the waste area fencing. In addition, no significant changes were observed in the south end grounds of the plant area and no operations were observed or evident (see memo to file dated March 28, 1977).

At the conclusion of discussions with the licensee personnel, two individuals who worked for Auer Construction Co. arrived with a truck to pick up some concrete blocks which belonged to the company and which were apparently stored on the licensee's site with other construction materials.

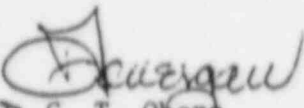
When the RIII inspector left the plant and office area, he proceeded to the south end of the facility property, south of the waste area, to be assured that there was no operation in progress which could not be observed from the north end of the waste area. The lack of operations was confirmed.

With the exception of items discussed in the preceding paragraphs, all else appeared to be status quo at the facility.

Brief tours of the licensee's West Chicago, Illinois facility will continue as necessary to maintain NRC, RIII cognizance.

April 13, 1977

Upon return to RIII offices, the inspector again contacted Mr. Meyer of the DuPage Health Department by telephone and appraised him of the findings. Upon further discussion the RIII inspector learned that the County personnel had not observed any operations actually in progress but had seen fresh tire tracks in the rain soaked mud. Mr. Meyer again stated that they would check the facility and get back to RIII with their observations.


for → C. T. Oberg
Radiation Specialist