

Local

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DEC rules dirt is safe

Radioactive soil taken from Porter Road called OK for landfill

By Patrick J. Bradley
Niagara Gazette

Excavation for the resurfacing of Porter Road east of Hyde Park Boulevard is scheduled to resume today following a determination by health and environmental officials that material taken from there last week does not pose a radiation hazard.

Work was suspended after a dump truck filled with dirt taken from Terry Ziuko's driveway was turned away from the BFI/CECOS landfill on Niagara Falls Boulevard when it activated a radiation monitoring device at the gate.

The truck was impounded last week and the state Department of Environmental Conservation performed a radiological analysis on the material. Test results were released Friday.

"The bottom line seems to be that the truckload, as well as any future truckloads that come out of that construction, are fine to dispose of at BFI," city Administrator Al Joseph said. "As we said from the very first night, there was not a danger to workers, no hazard to humans. It was a very low level of radiation."

Environmental activist Lou Ricciuti, who brought his own test equipment

to Porter Road last week, said at the time the material included slag from Buffalo Avenue factories involved in the World War II-era Manhattan project.

"This is above what the normal levels are," Ricciuti said then. "Anything above it should be questioned."

City Engineer Ashok K. Kapoor said that simply is not the case.

"This material has no relation to the Manhattan Project. I want to be clear on that," Kapoor said.

Kapoor said that in laymen's terms, the radiation that activated the BFI scanner was caused by naturally occur-

ring material, although tests showed "some of that slag may have been from some kind of phosphorous manufacturing."

The chief of the DEC's radiation section in Albany said the samples did not contain regulated radioactive material, Kapoor added.

Results were reviewed by the state Department of Health and a report will be forwarded to BFI. Once landfill officials review it, the facility is expected to accept the material, Kapoor said.

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