

LETTERS

Risks to a CWM visit

Chemical Waste Management, Inc. LLC announced in the August 9 *Sentinel* that it is planning to hold an open day on its site. This approach of "getting the public on your side" has been widely written about in waste industry trade magazines as a way to defuse the negative image of these operations.

There have been a number of recent examples of this including public awareness sessions related to CWM future expansion plans, classroom talks to the Lew-Port school children (this is called getting them young) and now, holding an open day, complete with free eats and goodies.

More troubling are the field trips by our school children to the CWM site where questions of potential residual radioactive contamination remain. CWM does not test the air emissions from its property; it only counts the number of air particulates (not what's in them), once every six days.

The CWM "Open Day" will no doubt extol the virtues of the "state-of-the-art technology" used in its current and future planned landfill designs. The open-topped silo of K-65 (the world's largest quantity of high level uranium oxide waste related to the Manhattan project, otherwise known as the development of the atomic bomb), which spewed deadly radon gas over Lew-

Port and Ransomville from the 1950s to the 1980s, was also probably considered "state-of-the-art" technology at the time.

The majority of this high level uranium oxide waste is stored in a clay-capped cell just off Pletcher Road, adjacent to CWM property. The remainder of this waste is scattered over a wide area, including it is believed, on CWM land. The U. S. Army Corps of Engineers has responsibility for the other side of the fence from CWM, and is in the process of assessing how serious the extent of the radioactive contamination is. However, nothing has been done to address the similar concerns about CWM's "side of the fence." This specific point was presented at an April public hearing in opposition to CWM's application for permit renewals.

In view of these concerns, I would suggest to the CWM management team, that it poses an unnecessary risk to public health to hold an open day on the CWM site. The majority of the public is unaware of the prior radiological history of the CWM site, and given the special vulnerability of children's health to radiological and chemical contaminants, an open house on the CWM site is improper.

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