

LETTERS

Health concerns regarding CWM's Sept. 13 Open Day

Despite recent public concerns, CWM is continuing with its plans to hold an "Open Day" on Sept. 13 on the company's toxic landfill property on Balmer Road.

What is particularly distasteful is the fact that CWM's management is fully aware that question marks exist concerning the potential radiological contamination of this site, and have even announced plans to call in radiation specialists to carry out assessments linked to their permitting application to expand their landfill capacity. So even though the "jury is still out" on this issue, CWM appears to be prepared to risk the health of our community in the name of public relations by holding this Open Day.

For what it's worth, here are my reasons for not attending this event:

CWM's toxic landfill is built on part of the former Lake Ontario Ordinance Works, which was contaminated with high level radioactivity related to the disposal of Uranium processed to manufacture the Atomic Bomb for World War II.

The widespread contamination on the federally-owned portion of this site is currently being studied for eventual cleanup by the U.S. Army Corps. CWM's adjacent site is unfortunately outside the scope of this work and therein lies the major question mark over its safety.

The potential for radioactive contamination on the CWM site was raised as a major issue at the

recent . . . public meetings for proposed expansion of CWM, and the company has publicly announced that they will evaluate and if necessary remediate any areas contaminated with radioactivity before this expansion takes place.

It is because of these acknowledged uncertainties that I believe that setting foot on the CWM property presents an unnecessary risk to the public. There is no evidence to show that the site is safe from an exposure standpoint. The jury is still out.

My logic in not attending is no different to how I would react to an invitation to a "Chernobyl" Open Day or a 3-mile island open day. If CWM believes that the site is safe, then I would simply ask them to provide the objective evidence of this to the public so that people can make an informed decision.

Open days are a standard tactic used in this industry; however, given the special risks of the Balmer Road site, I feel that public safety considerations should be the overriding factor. In view of this, I am asking CWM to please show their true concern and respect for this community and cancel the plans for this open day until the question mark over the potential radioactive contamination of the site has been scientifically answered.

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Chemist