

MICHIGAN: COMBUSTION ENGINEERING'S \$440 MILLION, 4,000 TPD MASS-BURN INCINERATOR IN DETROIT BEGINS BURNING. CONSTRUCTION WORKERS STAGE TWO WORK-STOPPAGES DUE TO COMPLAINTS OF RASHES, RESPIRATORY PROBLEMS, FATIGUE, SWOLLEN HANDS, BURNING EYES & NOSE BLEEDS.

DETROIT — As many as 75 tradesmen have walked off their jobs at the Detroit incinerator construction site, complaining that something in the air was making them sick.

The workers claimed airborne ash or some other substance in the incinerator's power plant was causing skin rashes, swelling of their hands, eye irritation, coughing, and possibly nosebleeds. *The Windsor Star (Canada) 1-12-89.*

The world's largest trash incinerator is now operating in downtown Detroit. The City of Detroit has flagrantly dismissed citizen concerns and threw out lawsuits by the EPA and the Ontario government of Canada which asked for acid scrubbers and baghouse pollution controls. The only pollution control on this mammoth incinerator is an electrostatic precipitator, which only removes particles. The City of Detroit claimed it would be prohibitively expensive to add acid scrubbers and a baghouse. The city was bolstered by consultant Kay Jones who claimed the scrubbers and baghouse wouldn't make any difference anyway. Jones works for ROY F. WESTON, the consultants for the city.

December 8, 1989: Incinerator begins to burn on test basis, while construction workers continue to complete work inside the incinerator facility.

January 2, 1989: Construction workers inside the facility voice health complaints.

January 6, 1989: Incinerator sends its first steam to electric utility, Detroit Edison

January 11, 1989: 75 construction workers walk off job because of severity of health

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complaints that range from respiratory problems, rashes, fatigue, swollen hands, burning eyes, and nosebleeds.

January 18, 1989: 40 electricians walk off job because of health complaints. 15 electricians sent to local clinic complaining of coughing, rashes and tightness of breath. They were working in the area where ash is taken out of the boilers.

Mid-January 1989: Construction workers smuggle samples of fly and bottom ash to **Greenpeace** for testing.

February 7, 1989: **Greenpeace** and the **Evergreen Alliance** hold press conference.

RESULTS OF GREENPEACE'S TEST ON DETROIT INCINERATOR ASH

*	<u>BOTTOM ASH EP TOX TEST</u>	<u>Allowable concentration</u>	<u>Results</u>
	CADMIUM	1.0 mg/l	5.90 mg/l
	LEAD	5.0 mg/l	40.4 mg/l

**	<u>ANALYSIS OF TOTAL METAL CONTENT</u>	<u>FLY ASH (mg/kg)</u>	<u>BOTTOM ASH (mg/kg)</u>
	TOTAL CADMIUM	278 ppm	147 ppm
	TOTAL LEAD	4,500 ppm	3,800 ppm

* **EP TOXICITY TESTS** were performed on **bottom ash** revealing leachate concentrations of **cadmium** and **lead** exceeding EPA hazardous waste standards by 6 and 8 times respectively. Comparison with data compiled by the **Environmental Defense Fund** indicates that Detroit's incinerator **bottom ash** gives higher levels of **lead** and **cadmium** leaching than any other bottom ash tested.

** **TOTAL METAL CONTENT.** The absolute levels of lead and cadmium in the fly ash sample were 4500 and 278 ppm respectively. Even if one ignores the other toxics present on this ash (like the dioxins and furans which are synthesized on fly ash particles) this ash presents a real danger to human health, because the particles are sufficiently small for them to penetrate deep into the lung.

COMBUSTION ENGINEERING FINED \$5,000 FOR 18 HEALTH CODE VIOLATIONS. "Workers at the new trash incinerator are exposed to threatening levels of lead in dust from the plant's ash said state officials, who Wednesday announced fines of \$5,000 against the Conn.-based company running the plant. The Michigan **Department of Public Health** cited **Combustion Engineering** for 18 health code violations for exposing workers to excessive airborne lead concentrations, failing to provide and require use of respirators, failing to warn workers of health hazards, and failing to monitor employees medical condition. 'The state health department is concerned about the level of lead in the ash to which the workers are exposed,' said Raj Wiener, acting director of the department. 'Prolonged exposure over many months could have an effect on the worker's blood, intestinal and nervous systems.'" *Detroit Free Press, 2-23-89.*

ASH TESTING. The City of Detroit had remained adamant in its refusal to test the incinerator ash up until February 2, 1989, when it agreed to work out a 'testing protocol' for ash testing. The protocol the City adopted was to run a toxicity test using **distilled water**, with total disregard of the fact that the tests should be run with, at the minimum, acetic acid as the leaching agent.

- to be continued -

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