

## NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH PUBLISHES PLAN FOR THE DISPOSAL OF MEDICAL WASTES IN MUNICIPAL SOLID WASTE INCINERATORS

In August 1989 the New York Department of Health published a report on "**A Statewide Plan for Treatment and Disposal of Regulated Medical Waste.**" "...This plan defines medical waste as all infectious waste\* (**\*Regulated Medical Waste**) plus the non-infectious waste resulting from diagnosis and treatment of human or from activities allied with health care research and development. Types of waste not considered as medical waste are garbage, office paper or medical packaging and other refuse or hazardous waste and low level radioactive waste whose disposal is otherwise regulated. Infectious waste\* is not defined as a hazardous waste under the regulations for hazardous waste management and therefore is not subject to the same restrictions on transportation, treatment and disposal as hazardous waste...Infectious waste\* permits are required for transporters of 50 lbs or more per month..." The plan outlines four infectious waste treatment and disposal options for N.Y. State with the major emphasis of disposal in municipal solid waste incinerators. The four options outlined in the plan are:

1. Incineration at municipal solid waste incinerators
2. Treatment on-site
3. Regional utilization of an on-site (hospital) treatment facility
4. Construction of regional treatment centers

"...While approximately half of the state's hospital-generated infectious waste is now incinerated on-site, no existing hospital incinerator can meet state air pollution requirements that take effect January 1, 1992. Retrofitting existing hospital incinerators to meet the new requirements can be difficult, expensive and lengthy process... Surveyed facilities in New York City, Long Island and the lower Hudson Valley generate in excess of 100 tons per day of infectious waste with an approximately equal amount of noninfectious medical waste. Based on this calculation, essentially all of the infectious waste plus noninfectious medical waste generated by these facilities could be incinerated at the five municipal solid waste incinerators in the area...municipal solid waste facilities are technologically capable of handling and burning infectious waste\* which is properly packaged and there is no fundamental technical or public health basis to deny health facilities access to **MSWIs** [municipal solid waste incinerators] for disposal of infectious waste\* and medical waste. These facilities would require only limited architectural changes to comply with infectious waste\* storage requirements. Simultaneously, **MSWI** owners and operators should take the initiative in developing training programs for workers handling the packaged infectious waste\* at the incinerator. The state will assist facilities in development and actual training. Health care facility operators are encouraged to provide assistance to **MSWI** facilities in training course development and implementation. The development of **catchment areas** specific for each incinerator would be the responsibility of a coordination plan developed by local solid waste authorities, under the guidance of New York State Departments of Health and Environmental Conservation. **Catchment areas** must be understood to include all generators of infectious waste\*, not simply the large generators. The logistics of delivery to the **MSWI** would be coordinated by facility management and appropriate local authorities..." This report, "A Statewide Plan for Treatment and Disposal of Regulated Medical Waste," is available from: The Records Access Office, N.Y. DOH, Empire State Plaza, Room 2230, Albany, NY 12237. The NYDOH has not made a determination, as yet, on whether to charge for this report or not. **Waste Not** was told that people should send in a written request to the above address for this report and await either the report or the reply if there is a charge. **Waste Not** will offer this report at 5¢ a page

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for a total cost of \$5 if the NY DOH's response is to charge 25¢ a page for this report.

**OREGON: RESIDENTS OPPOSE BURNING OF MEDICAL WASTE IN OGDEN MARTIN'S 550 TPD MASS-BURN INCINERATOR IN MARION COUNTY.**

"About 50 people had a clear message Tuesday night (9-26-89) for a county panel: Don't accept out-of-county medical waste at the Brooks burn plant...Residents said that a proposal to burn medical waste at the garbage plant would only make them more uneasy about the center. 'Incineration is a very primitive technology,' John Vance, a member of **Citizens for Clean Water**, said. 'It's just like field burning except with a smoke stack.' Marion County burns about 184,000 tons of garbage at its Brooks plant each year. Jim Sears, the county's solid waste director, has recommended that officials end a policy of refusing out-of-county medical waste and begin accepting 3,000 tons to 5,000 tons of such waste. Accepting the out-of-county medical waste would cut rates by about \$5 a year for residential customers, Sears said ...Several people asked why plant officials charged \$300 a ton for medical waste if the refuse was no more dangerous than household trash, which costs \$55 a ton to be burned. ...If the commissioners decide to allow the out-of-county waste, Vance said his group would do whatever it can to block the decision. 'We'll lay down in front of the trucks if that's what it takes,' he said." The Statesman Journal, 9-27-89. For further information contact John Vance, **Citizens for Clean Water**, 635 Belmont NE, Salem, OR 97301. Telephone after 5pm, 503-581-3973. The citizens group publishes a monthly newsletter called "**Clean Water News**" and the annual subscription rates are \$20 for individuals and non-profits, \$10 for students/seniors/low income citizens, and \$200 for businesses. For Canadian subscriptions add \$4.

**BLOUNT INC. IS PUTTING ITS GARBAGE-BURNING OPERATIONS UP FOR SALE.**

"Blount Inc., the Alabama-based firm that has almost finished building the downtown Minneapolis incinerator, is putting its garbage-burning operations up for sale. That means the controversial plant might have a new operator, according to Hennepin County officials. But they say **Blount** must prove that the incinerator can meet the county's performance standards before they would approve a new operator. The announcement follows last year's county-approved sale by **Blount** of its ownership in the \$81 million plant to a **General Electric** subsidiary. But **Blount** now is committed to finish construction and operate the plant, and these obligations would be part of what it would sell to a new owner. **Blount** said in a filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission that it will sell its entire garbage-burning business or bring in a partner. 'We believe the industry is facing several years of uncertainty because of unpredictable and rapidly changing political and environmental climates,' the firm told shareholders in its annual report..**Blount**, one of the nation's largest construction companies, began burning garbage to produce electricity in 1982 when it bought rights to a European incineration technology..Its incinerator in northwestern New Jersey (**Warren County**) began operating last year. The Minneapolis incinerator is scheduled to be in full operation by the end of the year, and one in Rhode Island still is awaiting a permit. In fiscal year 1989 the division containing **Blount's** incinerator operations reported a \$28 million loss on revenues of \$78 million..." Star Tribune, 6-27-89, Minnesota. For more information on the continuing battle by residents of Minneapolis to stop **Blount's** nearly-built incinerator from operating contact Leslie Davis, **Earth Protector**, 1138 Plymouth Building, Minneapolis, MN 55402, telephone: 612-375-0202.

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