

Waste Not

The Weekly Reporter
for rational
resource management

#93

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March 8, 1990

YORK COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

WESTINGHOUSE 1,340 TPD MASS-BURN INCINERATOR

COST: \$180 MILLION. ESTIMATED COST IN 1987: \$130 MILLION.

OWNER: YORK COUNTY SOLID WASTE AND REFUSE AUTHORITY

POPULATION: 322,391 (1984)

HEALTH RISK ASSESSMENT PREPARED BY: MALCOLM PIRNIE, White Plains, NY
INCINERATOR START-UP: OCTOBER 1989

LOCATION OF THE INCINERATOR: Located in a once scenic gorge that was forested with century old trees which have since been cut down to build the incinerator. The Westinghouse incinerator is on the Black Bridge Road in Manchester Township, one mile from Route US 30. **Within one mile of the incinerator:** elementary and high schools; dairy and meat farms; residential areas; and the ConAgra Flour Mill, established in 1848 and still operating. **1 1/2 miles from the incinerator:** peach and apple orchards. **5 miles from the incinerator** is the York Hospital. **8 miles from the incinerator** is York College. **Less than 9 miles from the incinerator** is Lancaster County's incinerator, now under construction (1200 tpd Ogden Martin). **10 miles away from the incinerator** is York County's reservoir and Three Mile Island nuclear plant. **20 miles from the incinerator** is the Peach Bottom Nuclear Plant.

According to Moody's Municipal Credit Report of 8-10-87 on York County's incinerator:

"A key credit consideration is the magnitude of the guaranteed debt service compared to the county's financial resources. Maximum annual debt service is only slightly less than county's current tax levy. If the guarantee were called upon it could have a very serious impact on the county's financial operations...The authority is responsible for the disposal of residue from the facility..."

DECEMBER 19, 1987

"In response to ROBBI's [citizens group opposed to incinerator] allegations that the incinerator will produce toxic air emissions, Ehrman [Exec. Dir. of the York County Solid Waste & Refuse Authority] said: **'There's a greater danger from eating a bag of radishes, drinking a cup of decaffeinated coffee, or drinking a beer than from being exposed to emissions from a state-of-the-art resource recovery facility.'**"
The York Dispatch.

HEALTH RISK CONCERNS

FEBRUARY 9, 1990

"To Whom It May Concern: Mrs. Marlene Keith has suffered for approximately 2 1/2 months a persistent cough and is strongly suspected as having bronchial asthma. In the past it was predicted if she was exposed to excessive amounts of irritants, she may develop symptomatology of cough secondary to bronchial asthma. At this point I have not proven definitively she has bronchial asthma but strongly suspect this on clinical grounds. Her symptoms began approximately a month after an incinerator was placed in her local area. During the past 2 weeks her symptoms have been more markedly worse and it is my understanding the incinerator now is operating almost on a capacity basis. She is aware since the incinerator went on line of the irritating character of the air in her home and around her home. When she gets away from her home, her symptoms dramatically improve and she also notices when the incinerator is shut down she does better. I conclude, therefore, the incinerator is in fact creating irritants which previously were not present and are exacerbating her tendency for bronchospasm (i.e. bronchial asthma)..." signed Stephen D. Lockey, III M.D., Lancaster, PA.

According to Bea Weitkamp of Residents Opposed to the Black Bridge Incinerator (ROBBI), Mrs. Keith has recently sold her home to move from the area for health reasons.

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TASK FORCE SET UP TO DEAL WITH RESIDENTS COMPLAINTS: The trash authority formed a Task Force to deal with the health, noise and odor complaints. Residents complain of a constant very loud humming noise. Over 200 residents have signed petitions complaining of increased health problems. The Task Force meetings are being held behind closed doors which has prompted The York Dispatch to initiate a litigation suit against the York trash authority. Task Force members are not allowed to discuss their meetings. **Westinghouse** has announced plans to reduce the the noise levels. They plan to put baffles in the stack to decrease the sound and to enclose the fuel oil pumps and the forced draft fan. Plans are underway to slow the nine fans on top of the incinerator roof. A faulty-built induction fan which produced a whinnying sound also will be fixed.

IMPORTING WASTE. Residents have seen garbage trucks from **New Jersey, New York** and **Virginia** entering the plant. Trash from York municipalities are delivered to the incinerator, but the county does not produce enough trash for the incinerator. Residents estimate there are as many as 600 garbage trucks a day delivering waste to the incinerator.

ASH LANDFILL. Ash is being dumped in the Hopewell Township landfill, approx. 10 miles from the incinerator. Under a consent agreement the trash authority has agreed to the Hopewell landfill will have to close by 1994. No plans have been made public as to where the ash will go after 1994. On February 7, 1990, the York Daily Record, reported an ash spill accident: "Traffic in the west lane of US 30 stood at a standstill while a **street sweeper scooped up the ash** spilled after a tailgate of a dump truck popped open at an intersection."

WESTINGHOUSE'S ELECTRICITY SALES AGREEMENT WITH METROPOLITAN EDISON COMPANY (MET-ED). "Met-Ed has agreed to purchase all electric energy in excess of station service requirements and pay after operation a rate of **7.96 cents per kWh** during peak times and **3.4 cents per kWh** subject to adjustment for inflation through the eleventh year. The rate after the eleventh year is based on a fixed component plus a variable component. The agreement extends until December 31, 2016. The authority is obligated to deliver **64,000,000 kWh** during the on-peak hours or pay damages of **\$.005 per kWh** for the difference not provided." Moody's Municipal Credit Report on York County, 8-10-87.

MALCOLM PIRNIE RECEIVED \$2.058 MILLION. "The York County Solid Waste Authority approved a budget increase for its consultant on the Black Bridge incinerator project in response to increased costs. The board raised its contract with **Malcolm Pirnie Inc.** of White Plains, NY, from **\$1.389 million to \$2.058 million**. The firm oversees the construction of the \$130 million county incinerator...Stephen C. Schwartz, **Malcolm Pirnie** vice-president, gave three reasons for the request: more work for the consultants in the construction, testing and optional services. 'We've been at it now for 10 months...The level of effort has been more than projected,' Schwartz said." The York Dispatch, 5-15-88.

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welcome.

Paul & Ellen Connett, Editors
82 Judson Street
Canton, New York 13617
(315)379-9200

York County is in violation of the Clean Air Act for Ozone Pollution. The incinerator sits in a valley and will use one million gallons of water a day. The major incinerator proponents have been the three-member board of county commissioners and the nine-member York County trash authority appointed by the county commissioners. The Pa. Sierra Club Chapter opposed the incinerator while the York County League of Women Voters endorsed it. York County is approx. 90 miles west of Philadelphia on the Maryland border. The citizens group **ROBBI** is in litigation with the State, represented by attorney Mark Lohbauer, on health risk issues.

For more information contact Bea Weitkamp, **ROBBI**, 2101 Pleasant View Drive, York, PA 17402. Tel: 717-755-4388.