

1/2/89

Dear Judy,


Sorry for the long delay in sending this off to you! The Christmas holidays found us with a lot of out-of-town guests...

At any rate, I was finally able to speak with Jim Masland, one of our selectmen here in Thetford (and, by the way, the only selectman I was able to contact). He was very helpful and this is what he told me:

- * For 1988, the Town of Thetford paid Barker Sargent \$25,190 for the right to gain access to the landfill.
- * The Town of Thetford could have easily become part of the Upper Valley Solid Waste District this past year, but the other districts were not ready. As a result, Thetford will join the UVSWD in 1989. Jim claims this will be discussed and voted on at our town meeting in March. Judy Bodwin believes otherwise...
- * Thanks to Act 78, all existing landfills must be closed by July 1, 1991. Because of the 'new technology' required by law, the cost of waste disposal will rise for Thetford, but Jim Masland didn't know by how much.
- * According to Jim, the long term COST AVOIDANCE associated with recycling is the best way to convince people it is a smart way to go.

The enclosed questions were difficult to write for obvious reasons: our primary objective is to educate and impress upon people the issue of 'cost avoidance', and question form is a tricky way to accomplish that objective. Anyway, this is a start, and hopefully, a good one.

Sincerely,


Cecy Peeler
RR2 Box 133
E. Thetford, VT 05043
(802) 785-4243

P.S. There is talk of a meeting
Jan. 15th with Barker Sargent.

P.P.S. How is your fund-raising going?

QUESTIONS FOR RECYCLE QUESTIONNAIRE:

1. Did you know that a new Vermont law (Act 78) will require all existing landfills in the State to close by July 1, 1991?
☐ yes ☐ no

2. Did you know that after July 1, 1991 all new and/or existing landfills will be required by law to add new technologies in order to operate?
☐ yes ☐ no

3. These new technologies will increase the cost of solid waste disposal. Please check which of the following you believe could help control the rising cost of waste disposal:
☐ eliminating curbside service
☐ recycling
☐ become part of a larger town district
☐ no alternative

The Problem ...

The Northeast has traditionally been one of the nation's most beautiful regions, a place where millions have chosen to settle and raise their children. Unfortunately, the Northeast is now suffering from serious toxic problems that threaten the very fabric of thousands of communities.

- There are 216 Superfund sites and over 2089 potential Superfund sites in the Northeast according to the government.
- Between 1980 and 1985 there were at least 229 major accidental releases of hazardous chemicals in the Northeast.
- There are 236 industrial and municipal polluters of the Merrimack River, dumping dangerous toxic chemicals in it. The Merrimack is a drinking water source for over 250,000 people.
- It is estimated that one fourth of the groundwater in the nation is contaminated. In Massachusetts, 46 communities have already closed their wells due to contamination from pesticides, industrial waste and leaking landfills.
- By 1995, there may be more than 70 municipal waste incinerators in operation in the Northeast, spewing dioxin and heavy metals in the air.

The Northeast, with a bounty of precious natural resources and poor record of environmental protection, is at a turning point. Never in its history has it faced a greater danger from toxic chemicals in the land, air, water and workplace.

The Solution ...

In the Northeast, citizens are fighting back against the toxic tide. They have come together as Northeast People Organized to Win Environmental Rights (P.O.W.E.R.) and are working together for environmental and economic justice and rights. People are demanding that the poisoning of their communities stop NOW. In towns in every Northeastern state, people are fighting for toxic prevention and to reclaim their rights to health, safe jobs and a clean environment.

Northeast P.O.W.E.R. has formulated a **Citizen's Toxic Prevention Platform** to address the nation's most pressing toxic problems and have offered specific solutions to the toxics crisis.

TOXIC PREVENTION '88 CONFERENCE

- Presidential candidates have been invited and are expected to attend. They will offer their vision of environmental protection and respond to proposals outlined in the Citizen's Toxic Prevention Platform.
- Representatives from federal health and environmental agencies will attend the conference. Citizens will present specific demands and press for government commitments for cleanup, prevention, law enforcement and technical assistance grants.
- Skilled experts will offer workshop training in Incineration, Toxic Waste Cleanup, Toxics Use Reduction, Nuclear Waste, Liability, Occupational Health and Safety, Organizing and Groundwater Contamination.
- Participants with special concerns will have the opportunity to attend caucuses where regional strategies will be planned.
- Citizens will design a voter education campaign for three days following the conference to let Americans know where the candidates stand on the toxics crisis.

PROGRAM

- 8:30- 9:15 Registration
- 9:15- 10:10 Plenary Session
- 10:15- 11:30 Workshops and Caucuses
- 11:30- 12:00 Plenary Session
- 12:00- 12:30 Lunch
- 12:30- 2:15 Candidates Forum
- 2:30- 4:00 Federal Regulators Session
- 4:00- 5:00 Citizen's Voter Education Campaign

TRANSPORTATION

From the South: Take Route 93 North to Rt. 495 South; connect to Rt. 3 North, then take Exit 1 in New Hampshire; at bottom of exit, take left to hotel.

From Maine: Take Route 95 to Rt. 101 West. Connect to Rt. 293 South, then take Rt. 3 South to Exit 1. At bottom of exit, take right to hotel.

From New Hampshire: Take Route 93 South to Rt. 3 South. Take Exit 1. At bottom of exit, take right to hotel.

LODGING

Lodging can be arranged for conference participants coming from long distances. For information, call (603) 595-7005 or (617) 482-1477. People are also encouraged to stay through Tuesday, February 13 to assist in the Citizens Voter Education Campaign. Volunteers will receive free lodging for Saturday, Sunday and Monday.

Please fill out and return to Toxic Prevention '88 Conference, c/o National Toxics Campaign, 29 Temple Place, 5th floor, Boston, MA 02111. Make registration checks payable to: Toxic Prevention '88.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (day) _____ (night) _____

Organization (if any): _____

- ☐ Enclosed is my check for \$15 to cover registration and lunch.
- ☐ Yes, I want to volunteer my time for the voter education campaign for a day or a couple of days after the conference.
- ☐ No, I will not attend the conference but I would like to make a donation anyway.
Enclosed is a check for \$_____ made out to **Toxic Prevention '88.**

commitment to recycling

Musings

by
Curt
Fields



In a news item last month, the *Valley News* reported that the ash from Claremont's incinerator had exceeded, for the second time, state and federal limits for toxicity.

This, of course, is no surprise to some people: those who have maintained that the ash produced by burning mixed garbage is a toxic waste.

The culprit here is cadmium, a metal that can cause neurological and kidney problems if absorbed by humans.

The prime source of cadmium, the report said, is ink and batteries.

But this piece isn't about incineration or the questionable morals of companies that seek greater profits rather than environmentally safe alternatives.

It is about a practice and philosophy of the counterculture that is gaining more and more mainstream acceptance. Now that the curtain is drawing to its inevitable close on the throw-it-away-and-forget-about-it lifestyle of the last 40 years, natural living and recycling are coming in style.

More and more home gardeners are moving away from chemical controls and, perhaps more importantly for now, communities are instituting recycling and composting programs as they struggle with decisions of how to take care of the garbage. After all, we can't just throw it over a cliff anymore.

According to an *Organic Gardening* editorial, the cities reclaiming the most garbage recycle 28 percent of it. But with lawn debris and paper products alone counting for about 49 percent of

the trash stream, 28 percent is embarrassingly low.

The Japanese recycle 50 percent of their trash.

It seems that the habit of recycling can't be casually picked up. It must be taught. Recycling, conservative use of natural resources and even the habit of purchasing products in recyclable or reusable containers should be a course in the schools from an early grade. And recycling should be mandatory. We can't wait for corporations to give us the answers.

Recycling is a determined behavior. Once we had occasion for a reunion of sorts in our home. Some acquaintances came over for a potluck dinner. Not one person asked what to do with the glass, metal, paper or even the scraps of left over food. "Where's the trash," was the cry of the day.

I had to rummage through the rubble afterwards collecting the recyclables.

Contrast this with other friends that frequent our home, who routinely separate glass, metal, paper, etc.

Teaching environmental responsibility and making it law, as well as instituting a bottle bill, would eventually make recycling an ingrained behavior - like shutting the door on a winter's day, and just as important.

Recycling is mandatory in 10 states, including Maine, Rhode Island and Connecticut.

Even if all were perfect with incineration, the process only reduces what goes into the landfill, it doesn't eliminate it.

Conscientious, dedicated recycling would cut this volume even further.

Mandatory recycling would also help keep batteries out of the mouth of the beast.

P.S.: Batteries are a hazardous waste. Many area merchants keep buckets in their stores to accept used batteries for proper disposal. Please use them.

ARGUS-CHAMPION

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6/24/86 The Valley News / Lebanon NH

Local/Region

Sununu Appoints Environmental Head

CONCORD (AP) — Gov. John Sununu has tapped the man who headed the official state effort to fight a nuclear waste dump to be director of the new state Department of Environmental Services.

Alden Howard, 61, from Rye is an electrical engineer and executive with the Henley Group in Hampton, a company that builds trash-to-energy incinerators.

Previously, he was a manager for General Electric in Lynn, Mass., for 26 years.

The legislature created the Department of Environmental Services as part of a continuing consolidation and streamlining of state government.

The governor had pushed for the new department, saying agencies which had overlapping responsibilities and competing interests often created unnecessary red tape on environmental issues. He said that coordinating the independent

environmental agencies through the new department would be the most important issue to face Howard, if he is confirmed by the Executive Council.

Sununu also cited as priorities for the new department dealing with threats of lawsuit by the government over disposal areas in 12 communities and the continuing state effort to establish long-range plans to protect groundwater.

The governor said Howard's managerial skill was his most important qualification, but he said also that he is comfortable with Howard's concern for the environment.

Howard was chairman of the state task force that worked to build a case against locating a high-level nuclear waste dump in the southwestern part of the state.

The governor and council also approved selling 4,400 acres to the government to expand the White Mountain National Forest.

John Flanders, commissioner of the Department of Resources and Economic Development, said the effort was a coordinated attempt by the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests and the Appalachian Mountain Club.

The land is in Stark, Lancaster and Northumberland, in far northern New Hampshire.

Flanders told the council in a letter that the groups wanted the forest service to have the land because it is better adapted to public conservation, watershed protection, forestry and recreation.

The council also accepted \$136,000 in federal money and appropriated some of its own for AIDS research.

The request from the Division of Public Health was for four temporary positions to help develop and implement AIDS education and risk reduction programs.

Once Again, Modern Trash Solutions May Haunt The Future

DONELLA MEADOWS

FOR THE VALLEY NEWS

A hundred years ago the people who lived on what is now our farm threw their garbage behind the barn. We still dig up empty horse liniment bottles there.

That garbage system had two advantages. It was extremely cheap. And each family took care of its own trash, which guaranteed a certain intrinsic responsibility. If you threw out something noxious, you had to live with it. If you threw out something valuable instead of mending it, composting it, or feeding it to the pigs, that was your loss.

Of course that system could only work with low population densities and austere lifestyles. The population has increased, and even more so the flow of material each of us buys and dumps. Even in our rural area, private dumps had to be forbidden.

When we first moved to our farm 13 years ago, we buried paper trash in a barrel near our garden, we fed food scraps to the chickens, and the rest we hauled three miles to the town dump. There it was occasionally burned. Between burnings it leached steadily into Blow-Me-Down Brook, which carried it to the Connecticut River. Rats congregated at the dump and made good sport for sharpshooters on Saturday nights.

That system was still cheap, but the environmental laws of the 1970s put an end to it. The state prohibited open dumps, and we are no longer allowed to burn in our backyard. We still throw organic wastes to the chickens. The rest of our garbage is now picked up every Wednesday, at considerable expense, and hauled seven miles to the Lebanon landfill, where it leaches directly into the Connecticut River.

I remember the town meeting when we voted to participate in the landfill. Some people said that landfills leach into groundwater. Others observed that landfills fill up. People talked about recycling, but that would require each of us to separate our garbage, and of course we would never do that. We decided to solve the problem at hand — how to replace the old town dump — rather than the problems of the future.

Problems of the future have a habit of becoming problems of the present. Now, all over the country,

landfills are leaching toxic substances into groundwater and are filling up. People are not volunteering to have the next one in their neighborhood. Truck routes are lengthening. Costs are rising.

Now the "solution" is a "resource-recovery plant," which is to say a huge modern incinerator that burns garbage and in the process generates steam and electricity. Claremont, N.H., and 23 towns near it are putting up one of these plants, a relatively small one, at a cost of \$16 million. So is Concord, N.H. And Holyoke, Mass. Boston will ship its garbage to one incinerator in Saugus and another in Rochester, Mass. Resource recovery plants are sprouting all over Connecticut, and New York City is planning five of them.

Aside from the expense, these incinerators are a town manager's dream. They don't put gunk in the groundwater, and they recover energy, which can be sold for money. But even with that income, plus federal subsidies, these plants are far, far more expensive than landfills.

The incinerators work best in large units, so a single one can serve a large area, minimizing the number of neighborhoods to be upset (but increasing trucking). They are built and operated by private companies, removing a burden from public officials and turning it over to private enterprise.

But some people are still worried. They talk about air pollution from the resource-recovery plants. And they have an even more basic complaint, that the whole evolution of garbage-handling, from town dumps to landfills to incinerators, is wrong. It is based on an "out-of-sight, out-of-mind" mentality that generates ever-more costly and damaging garbage systems. We are still, they say, solving the problem at hand by setting up worse problems for the future.

I will summarize here their specific worries about resource-recovery incinerators. And since that will run me out of space, next week I'll talk about the alternatives — the long-term solutions to the garbage problem.

If you take all the stuff we throw away, mix it together, and burn it, you create complicated and poorly understood chemical reactions. Some of what comes out of the smokestack is nasty.

Sulfur and nitrogen oxides and hydrochloric acid generated acid rain. Carbon dioxide in the long term will change the climate. Heavy metals like cadmium, lead, chromium, and mercury are toxic and permanent in the environment.

But the most worrisome pollutants are dioxins and furans.

Dioxins and furans are classes of organic chemicals — there are more than 200 of them, most of which are exceedingly toxic. They cause cancer and birth defects in laboratory animals. They are long-lived in the environment. They are the contaminants that made the news at Times Beach, Mo., and Seveso, Italy. They are about as hazardous as hazardous wastes can be.

Solid-waste-burning incinerators actually create dioxins and furans. The chemicals probably form when chlorine-containing plastics such as polyvinyl chloride are burned.

Some people say that burning at a high temperature will destroy the dioxins thus formed, so incinerators can be operated safely. Others say that dioxins form after the gases have left the combustion chamber and cooled, and therefore are not affected by the burning temperature.

The surest thing to say is that no one has yet operated a trash-burning incinerator that does not produce dioxins and furans.

In Europe, where incinerators have been around longer than here, they are a source of major controversy.

Sweden has declared a moratorium on their construction, because it has found dioxin in human milk 10 to 100 times higher than the level considered safe. Denmark estimates that refuse incineration is the major source of dioxins entering the environment and has found that exposure to these dioxins comes primarily through dairy products. The incinerator in Hamburg, Germany, emits 700 times the recommended limit of dioxin. The German papers are declaring that "the era of mass garbage burning is over."

In this country there is as yet little experience with these plants and not much monitoring of dioxin emissions. As with landfills, we are once again getting into something we know very little about.

When the public officials say, as they regularly do, that the dioxin problem is overrated, that by complying with EPA regulations their plant will be safe, that plant emissions will not be hazardous to human health, they might be right. And they might not be.

WHEN IT COMES TO HAZARDOUS WASTE, WHO'S PROTECTING YOUR INTERESTS?

"The ash work, because we did not anticipate it, has become what we call a 'crisis' here at EPA [Environmental Protection Agency]. The word 'crisis' means we did not anticipate having to do this important work during this [time] frame. One day we woke up and found out that we had a lot of work to do on ash."

-Marcia Williams, director of EPA's
Office of Solid Waste, from Waste
Age/February 1987

New Hampshire's Office of Solid Waste has its own ash problem - where to put the ash from the Durham incinerator. Let's see how the State is going to solve that problem before they approve another problem here.

Incinerators around the country are failing the EPA's Extraction Procedure (EP) test on ash. For a solid waste to fail the EP test the leachate must contain more than 100 times the current safe drinking water standard for a specific material. The Signal plant in Saugus, Massachusetts failed the EP test for lead in fly ash, lead and cadmium in bottom ash, and lead and cadmium in combined ash (fly ash mixed with bottom ash). The leachate from the mixed bottom/fly ash from Signal's RESCO plant in Baltimore had almost 200 times the current drinking water standard of lead.

WE DO NOT WANT SIGNAL'S METALS AND DIOXINS IN NEWPORT'S WELLS AND IN THE SUGAR RIVER.

Municipal solid waste incinerator ash (especially fly ash) contains enough toxic metals and organic chemicals to merit classification and treatment as a hazardous waste, though at the present time the EPA does not officially list it as a hazardous waste. However, some states have or intend to more strictly regulate ash:

Washington State considers it to be a "dangerous waste" (their equivalent of federal hazardous waste);

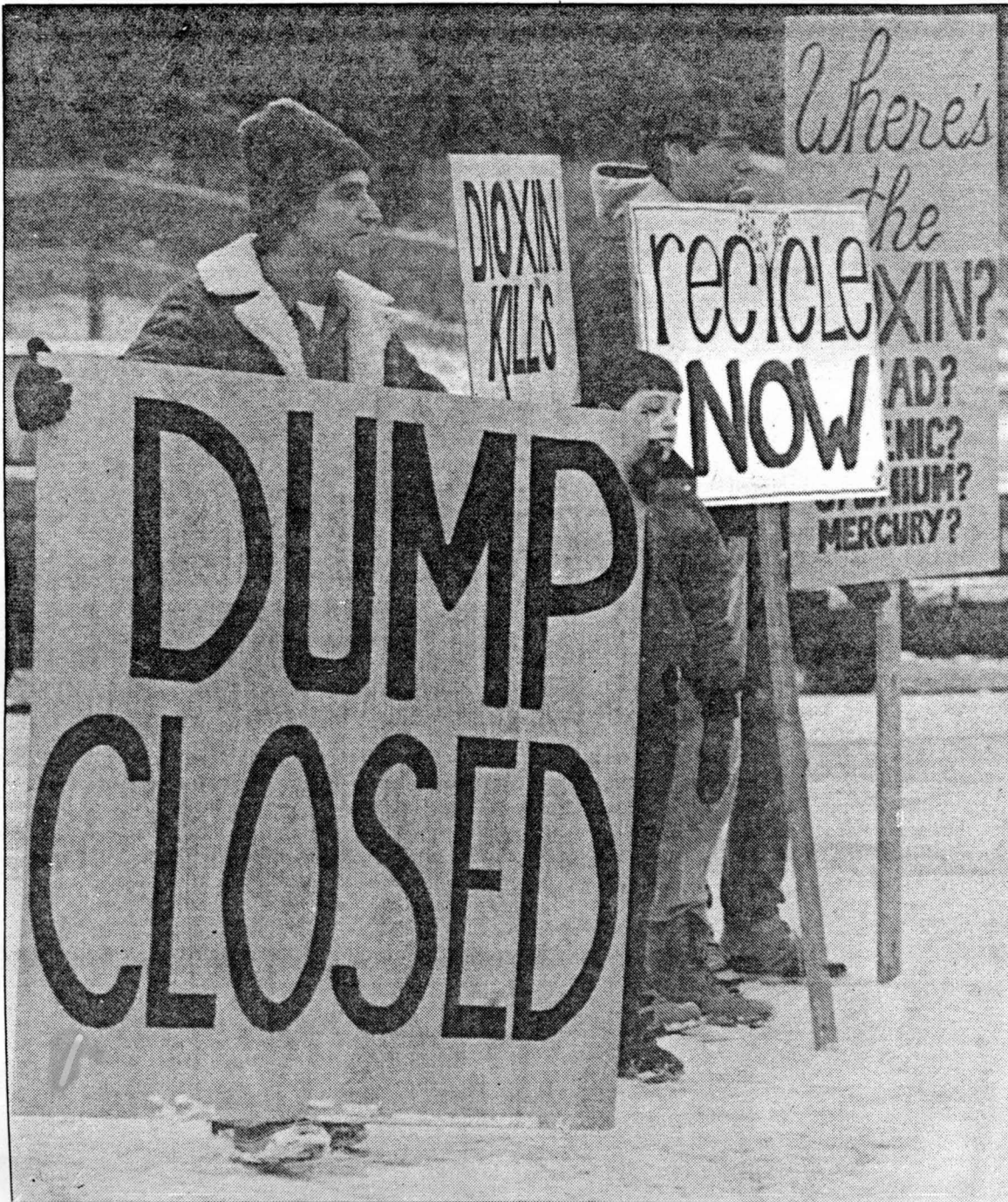
California considers it to be a hazardous waste until declassified by administrative procedure or a waste leaching test;

Maine identifies fly ash as a hazardous waste due to EP toxicity

WHY AREN'T THE CITIZENS OF NEW HAMPSHIRE PROTECTED TOO?

Diluting the fly ash with the bottom ash is allowed under present regulations, though such mixing in no way alters the hazardous character of the waste. It makes little sense to require facilities to install state-of-the-art pollution control devices to prevent dispersion of fly ash into the air, and then disperse the same waste through mixing with bottom ash and lax handling, transportation, and disposal requirements.

STOP THIS SCANDAL NOW! JUST SAY NO TO AN ASH DUMP IN NEWPORT!



State orders ashfill closed

□ DES action takes SWP by surprise

Ordered by the state Department of Environmental Services, the New Hampshire - Vermont Solid Waste Project has halted incinerator ash shipments to the Newport ashfill.

Citing "potential ... stability problems" in a perimeter berm, Solid Waste Bureau administrator Thomas Sweeney issued an Dec. 28 administrative order.

Department concerns centered on the perimeter berm. The berm is the compacted soil dike surrounding the ash deposit area. From its peaked top, the berm slopes outward and drops approximately three feet to the perimeter roadway.

Department inspections found groundwater seeping from the berm's upper slope; premature deterioration of the surrounding roadway, and saturated soil conditions in the berm's top layer.

The department had also received reports that a bulldozer had sunk into the berm, and groundwater appeared to be seeping from an outside edge.

Sweeney said, "The ... conditions indicate potential slope stability problems at the perimeter berm." The order said "the situation requires thorough evaluation" to ensure groundwater protection and the integrity of the ashfill's liner system.

After receiving the order Tuesday, project officials stopped trucks from dumping Claremont incinerator ash. "Shipments stopped as of (Tuesday) afternoon," said director John Cook.

Since opening Oct. 20, the Newport facility landfilled approximately 50 tons of ash a day.

Opponents, who said the state's action showed their environmental and groundwater pollution concerns had been amply justified, gathered at the ashfill's entrance Monday morning. According to John Ames - a member of Working On Waste, (WOW), a citizens group opposed to massburn incineration - the ashfill posed "an imminent health threat."

WOW spokesman William Gallagher, who received a copy of the mailed order Saturday, said, "Now we're finding out ... that everything we said was true." He called for Cook's resignation as well as those of the project's executive committee.

Last summer Environmental Services approved a new ashfill

— photo by Curt Fields

SIGN OF THE TIMES: Bill Muzzev a neigh-

Waste Bureau has told the town: close the

SOME EXCELLENT REPORTS AND REVIEWS OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH
REFUSE INCINERATION.

- 1) Report of the Ministers Expert Advisory Committee on Dioxins , published jointly by Health and Welfare Canada and Environment Canada (Nov 1983)
- Copies available from:
Health and Welfare Canada,
Tunney's Pasture,
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.
- 2) "The Financial and Environmental Impact of Garbage Incineration" by Mark Dunlea. July 11 1985.
Price: \$7.00. (Pertains to N.Y. State but a lot of very useful and general information)
- Environmental Planning Lobby,
196 Morton Avenue,
Albany, N.Y. 12202.
518-462-5526.
- 3) "The Environmental Aspects of Resource Recovery Facilities". A position paper prepared by the Public Advocate for N.J. Written by Susan Remis. Pertains to N.J. but again a lot of very useful and general information. (May 1984)
- Dept. of the Public Advocate,
State of New Jersey,
CN 850,
Trenton, N.J. 08625.
(Susan Remis 609-292-1692)
- 4) "A Burning Question: Air Emissions from Municipal Incinerators " Joanna Kidd (Oct 1984).

The only drawback to this excellent review is that it costs \$20.00 (Canadian) - perhaps you can get a library to purchase.
- The Pollution Probe Foundation,
12 Madison Avenue,
Toronto, Ontario, Canada.
- 5) "Air Pollution Control at Resource Recovery Facilities " California Air Resources Board, May 24 1984. A mine of information. But be wary of the simplistic transition from lab destruction of dioxins to destruction in msw incinerators (the Benfenati graphs have been printed without pointing out that the y-axis is a natural log scale, and the infamous Hasselriis graphs appear without data points !)
- Kitty Howard,
C.A.R.B.,
P.O. Box 2815,
Sacramento, CA 95812.
- 6) Petition and lawsuit directed at the EPA on dioxin regulations (or rather, lack of !)

Also a fine critique of an EIS prepared for an incinerator for San Marcos, Ca.
- Dr. Ellen Silbergeld,
Environmental Defense Fund,
Suite 150, 1616 P. Street, N.W.,
Washington D.C. 20036
202-387-3500.
- 7) Directory of Recycling Opportunitites.

(I haven't seen this , but I am told it is very good and although it is directed towards N.J. it could be useful to other states)
- Mary Schiel,
N.J. Office of Recycling,
101 Commerce Street,
Newark, N.J.
- 8) A paper presented before the Air Pollution Control Association, Detroit, Michigan, June 1985, by Dr. Barry Commoner. Consultants and Engineers who are trying to sell incinerators make a point of ridiculing Commoner and his suggestions. Don't be put off by this tactic, read the arguments.
- Dr. Barry Commoner,
C.B.N.S.,
Queens College,
Flushing, N.Y.
-
- Maybe they can't forgive him for exposing Hasselriis's voodoo

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