

Letter to the Editor - Canton Repository
Sunday, February 9, 2003
Rep is wrong to put its faith in committee

Faking environmental test results by labs hired by corporations trying to avoid big cleanup costs is a serious issue, as a recent Associated Press article ("Water, soil, air may not be safe," Jan. 22) and Repository editorial ("Watch those tests," Jan. 28) point out. Bogus test results by these corporate labs make work done at toxic waste sites highly suspect. But this is only half the problem. The other half is suspect testing at government labs.

Environmental Protection Agency Inspector General Nikki Tinsley may be somewhat of a watchdog when it comes to exposing fraudulent tests performed by corporate labs, but our experience in dealing with her indicates she has lain down and played dead when it comes to exposing questionable testing practices within the government's in-house labs.

The Concerned Citizens of Lake Township, the grassroots group that has fought for a safe and permanent cleanup at the Industrial Excess Landfill toxic dump in Uniontown, has claimed for 20 years that bogus and selective tests result in bad cleanup decisions, including the current absurd notion that planting trees and scrubs will soak up all the toxins. This is why CCLT has been trying to gain access, but has been blocked thus far, to monitoring wells to conduct independent testing by independent labs with a \$50,000 grant it was awarded a year ago.

It's a mistake for The Repository to suggest that the Technical Information Committee containing representatives from the EPA, corporate polluters, Lake Township and health department will "watch" the testing issue. These entities have for years trashed CCLT for pointing out questionable testing procedures used at IEL.

Questionable testing procedures by corporate and government labs make the need for independent testing by CCLT more urgent than ever.

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