

Akron Beacon Journal
Thursday, February 24, 2005

Activists battle EPA over radiation
'04 report spurs groups to seek further testing of Uniontown landfill
By Bob Downing, Beacon Journal Staff Writer

The question of whether radioactive materials are buried in a Uniontown landfill continues to simmer – with a new debate between a grass-roots group and state and federal agencies.

Chris Borello of the Concerned Citizens of Lake Township says additional testing is needed at the 30-acre Industrial Excess Landfill to assure there are no radiation problems.

But the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. EPA both insist the only radiation at the dump off Cleveland Avenue Northwest is what would normally be found and that low-level radiation is not an issue.

At the center of the latest debate is a 2004 report from the U.S. EPA Inspector General that suggests that manmade radioactive materials were found in water samples taken in 2000-2001.

That triggered a new flurry of letters and appeals by Borello's group and the Akron chapter of the American Friends Service Committee to elected officials and agencies, including member of Congress and U.S. EPA Inspector General Nicki Tinsley.

"It's insane," Borello said. "If there's uncertainty, more testing is needed...But we don't see (federal officials) doing anything."

Larry Antonelli of the Ohio EPA and Tim Fischer of the U.S. EPA both said the report may be misleading but radiation is not a problem.

The report cited radioactive material found in one well. The material was found at low levels, close to the limits of the detection equipment to find it. A repeated test showed even lower levels in that well. It is uncertain if the material was found in eight other wells or at what levels, officials said.

Borello is also unhappy that her group may lose a \$50,000 Department of Energy grant. Her group wanted to use the money for additional testing but was denied access to the property by the companies being held liable for the cleanup: Goodyear, Bridgestone-Firestone, B.F. Goodrich and GenCorp.

The dump accepted an estimated 1 million gallons of toxic waste and 750,000 tons of local trash between 1966 and 1980 when it was shut down.

Bob Downing can be reached at 330-996-3745 or bdowning@thebeaconjournal.com