

## **Radiation testing to end at IEL, but not concerns**

By Paul M. Krawzak Copley Washington correspondent

WASHINGTON — Testing for radiation at the Industrial Excess Landfill near Canton is set to end, despite protests from local activists. Lake Township and four companies that are called “potentially responsible parties” in the cleanup of the federal Superfund site have announced they will stop testing for radiation in ground water. They will continue testing for benzene and other contaminants that have been found. The next round of tests is scheduled for next week.

“We didn’t find anything of substance (as far as radiation),” said Tom Shalala, a consultant to the township. “We found some hits that have been attributed to natural background” radiation. “We haven’t seen any reason to request any further (radiation) sampling.” However, Lake Township Trustee Sue Ruley said even though no radiation testing is scheduled in the next round, that does not rule it out forever. “It means this quarter that was the game plan. It doesn’t mean never,” she said.

At the township’s request, the four companies voluntarily are conducting ground-water tests at monitoring wells in the landfill. The township requested the tests as a way to monitor contamination. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is reviewing proposals to cap the landfill to prevent contamination from spreading to surrounding neighborhoods. Test results are sent to the EPA to be validated.

The landfill previously served as a dump for large tire and rubber companies in Akron.

Paul Wolford, a spokesman for the four companies, said during the first four rounds of testing, beginning in August 2000, “nothing above normal background radiation” was found.

Two activists, however, contend the testing found “detectable levels” of radioactive plutonium, which they said should not be present in ground water. The two — Chris Borello, president of the Concerned Citizens of Lake Township, and Greg Coleridge, director at the American Friends Service Committee — are opposed to ending radiation tests. “We feel that the levels ... were above background,” Coleridge said. “Plutonium in general is considered to be a human-created artifact product, and so the question is, is any amount of plutonium naturally occurring?” U.S. EPA officials do not object to ending the radiation tests.

Ross del Rosario, remedial project manager for the U.S. EPA office in Chicago, expressed the agency’s concurrence with the plans in a letter to Richard C. Laubacher, a senior environmental engineer with Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co., one of the potentially responsible parties. In the Aug. 23 letter, Rosario wrote: “It is my understanding that there will be no testing for radiation during this sampling round (in September), which is a departure from the four previous surveys. ... As in the past, U.S. EPA Region 5 has no objections to your proposal, provided the previously approved field and sampling plans for ground water sampling at (the landfill) are complied with.”

Shalala and Wolford said plans to end radiation testing are in keeping with an agreement worked out between the township and companies in August 2000. Under that agreement, radiation sampling would be conducted only for one year unless tests showed radiation above natural background levels, they said.

This page was created September 1, 2001  
Copyright ©2001 The Repository  
Canton Repository