

Route #1, Box 85
Brownsville, WI 53006
December 8, 1980

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Mr. Stan Gores
Fond du Lac Reporter
33 W. 2nd Street
Fond du Lac, WI 54935

Dear Mr. Gores:

The following is submitted as a letter to the editor.

There are important policy issues for the public in the recent article entitled "Secret Agreement Made by The D.N.R. for Cleanup of Hazardous Wastes". First, the clean-up effort of hazardous wastes was kept a secret because of fears that disclosure would cause unnecessary public alarm. This assumes that the public cannot react appropriately when provided with all details of a hazardous waste situation. I cannot agree with this assumption. Also, when the public does become alarmed it usually asks questions which when answered raises the awareness and ability of the public to prevent and solve future related incidents. Hazardous waste disposal is a past, present, and future problem for the people of Wisconsin. An aware and educated public is the key to solving the hazardous waste problem. Secret agreements do not help.

Second, the article states the discovery of hazardous waste was on July 22 and that the cleanup of those wastes was started on November 12. If these reported dates are correct, it indicates a reaction time of over three and a half months by the D.N.R. and the Freeman Chemical Company. This reaction time to a hazardous waste situation is much too long. I believe an informed public might have shortened this reaction time.

Third, the article states that the D.N.R. did not certify the Freeman Company's tests to identify the wastes because of the costs of the tests, of Freeman's good reputation, and because there was "no imminent hazard". What is the State's financial capability to make an independent assessment of a potential hazardous waste situation? Is it in the public's interest to rely solely on the data of the producer of hazardous wastes? I believe it is not. What is the D.N.R.'s definition and criteria for the determination of a good, bad, or average reputation of a private industry? What are the D.N.R.'s policies in regard to equal or unequal treatment of the producers and disposers of hazardous wastes? It is my opinion that producers and disposers of the same type of hazardous wastes should be treated equally and that the public be made aware of that treatment. Lastly, what is the definition of "no imminent hazard"?

Mr. Stan Gores

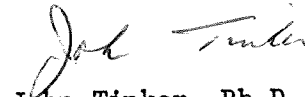
-2-

December 8, 1980

Does hazard mean an explosion, a fire, surface or groundwater contamination, an illness, or other affliction? What is the time consideration in the definition of imminent? Does imminent mean a minute, a year, or 50 years or longer? These definitions are important to the health of the public because Wisconsin is heavily dependent on groundwater for its drinking water supply. The public will not be aware of these questions and definitions if secret agreements are made between the D.N.R. and chemical companies.

In conclusion, I believe secret agreements between the D.N.R. and hazardous waste producers and disposers are not in the best interest of the public and are not in the spirit of recent State and Federal laws dealing with hazardous wastes.

Sincerely,



John Tinker, Ph.D.
Route #1, Box 85
Brownsville, WI 53006

JT/jh

cc: Mr. Jack Thorsen, Chief
Hazardous Waste Section
D.N.R.

CARROLL BESADNY
SECRETARY, D. N. R.

