

PC# 23

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STATE OF ILLINOIS
Pollution Control Board

Illinois Pollution Control Board
Case No. AS 08-10
(2nd statement from writer)

From: Tom Edwards
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Peoria Disposal Co.'s New Ploy to Stymie Closure

Synopsis:

-- PDC wants up to 95,000 cubic yards *per year* of electric arc steel mill furnace wastes loaded with toxics from throughout the Midwest to be delivered initially to its hazardous waste landfill in Peoria. And then, via a qualified okay by Illinois EPA, PDC would attempt to detoxify these wastes by a "private, secret" method, then reload them onto trucks and deliver them to a regular municipal trash landfill. Purpose, expensive as it is, is to prevent having to finish filling and closing its Peoria landfill, and meet stiff closure regulations. Local environmentalists are appealing EPA's closed door decision. Its "secret" Star Chamber procedure was outlandish, and in violation of all open meeting protocols. The EPA decision does not mean that these furnace residues will be made clean, only that their welter of toxic materials would be somehow "reduced" in toxic impact, at least for a time, to what might be "safer" at the moment. This would apply only to 14 so-called "non-volatile heavy metals" reported present, including highly toxic mercury, lead, and cadmium. But it would not apply to the array of "volatile" toxic chemicals in these wastes, which dissipate into our air, such as poisonous dioxin and furans.

Discussion:

What is the sanity let alone citizen health and safety benefit in PDC's latest attempt to stymie closure of its Peoria toxic waste landfill by expensively shunting its toxic laden steel mill waste elsewhere *after* going through an uncertain, and also expensive process, to at least temporarily immobilize most of the toxics arriving in the steel mill waste. The toxics, still there, likely dissipate elsewhere later.

PDC says at least 10 steel mills would be trucking their waste some hundreds of miles to unload it at PDC's landfill in Peoria so that its toxicity can, hopefully, be "reduced," and so it can then be re-trucked to one or more regular city-county landfills.

The mills could be doing that right at their own facilities.

PDC wants to keep its remaining space open in its dangerously located Peoria landfill so that neither Peoria County nor the Illinois EPA can legally close it. That was the message delivered by PDC's attorney at IPCB's public hearing August 18.

The IEPA has so far given a qualified okay to this maneuver. But environmentalists are appealing this decision to the Illinois Pollution Control Board.

The IEPA states [Part II, Sect. 104.406, IEPA Filing, 6/12/08] that PDC's "electric arc furnace dust will likely meet the required" lower level of milligrams per liter of waste after its *secret* treatment. But that is far from removal. And "likely" also means maybe.

Moreover, PDC in its April 25, 2008, petition to the IPCB, claims (bottom, page 2) that

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it has secret "new proprietary stabilization technology" for "KO61 electric arc furnace dust" that will (top, page 3) render it "stabilized" enough "to meet applicable land disposal restrictions." PDC does not claim any removal of the toxic metals in the dust by the process, or how long they would be held in check.

Most steel mills have means to deal on site with the toxicity of their wastes. Perhaps it could be less expensive to ship it elsewhere to detoxify it. But probably the main reason for shipping it away is that the mills want to shed themselves of the liability and responsibility of dealing with the toxics in their wastes, and so divest themselves of that liability by trucking their waste to Peoria and paying PDC to landfill it.

For PDC, which now has 30 other operations dealing with waste, to close its first one -- after 78 years of dumping on its site, but under state regulations only for the last 21 years -- could entail a hugely expensive longterm remediation effort, a frightening postclosure prospect. And PDC has apparently spent into the millions in recent years to try to circumvent this closure. Perhaps the company is afraid of what will be discovered or transpire after it is closed. [Note: This writer has long urged a means whereby the state and federal EPAs could share with PDC in this daunting prospect.] Rather, PDC could be plowing its profits into healthier channels, both for itself and certainly for society.

At present PDC leaves various types of its toxic waste sitting "out to cure" before putting them in its "landfill" to eventually be covered with soil. Volatile chemicals certainly are venting off into the air while sitting, perhaps for long periods, outside the landfill, or in. For PDC, this gets rid of such chemicals -- but into the air that local people must breathe.

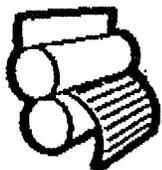
This may be the ultimate fate of much of the up to 95,000 cubic yards *per year* of steel mill wastes PDC says it intends to detoxify and then re-transport to local municipal dumps. Stacked vertically, 95,000 cubic yards would be *54 miles high*. There are certainly vastly superior alternatives, and for the sake of our planet, we had better start finding and using them. Only nuclear waste is more hazardous than toxic waste landfills.

And we need to keep high in our minds that PDC's mountain of poisonous toxic waste sits as close as 50 feet above the Peoria area's main water supply aquifer, and immediately upwind of the air Peorians must breathe. It is the only still operating such facility in the nation in such a perilous location to people.

We are also alerted that the PDC camp will try getting EPA approval to achieve compliance by simply adding soil to "dilute" the toxicity of the waste so it can be taken to regular landfills. It has tried this before.

If Illinois is to have a toxic waste landfill for it and other states to use, then the state must be the site owner, put it in the safest location possible, and all forces combine to make it the best such facility of this kind.

The PDC matter is an elephant in our living room that political office holders and seekers are afraid to even acknowledge. The IEPA decision needs to be summarily dismissed.



PLEASE FORWARD TO

John Therriault

THE FOLLOWING IS FROM

Tom Edwards

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including this cover sheet.

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