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MAY 21 2003

STATE OF ILLINOIS
Pollution Control Board

May 19, 2003

PC #1

Dorothy Gunn
Clerk of the Illinois Pollution County Board
100 W. Randolph
Chicago, IL 60601

Re: Petitioner PCB #03-125
Petitioner PCB #03-133
Petitioner PCB #03-134
Petitioner PCB #03-135

Dear Ms. Gunn:

This letter is to notify you of my objections to the proposed 80-acre expansion of the Waste Management Landfill in Kankakee County,

Evidence presented at hearings held in November and December 2002 clearly documented that Waste Management's proposal clearly failed to two of the nine criteria governing an application for a solid waste landfill

Of critical concern to me is the failure of the proposal to meet Criterion 2, which addresses whether the public health, safety and welfare will be protected.

Waste Management's proposed expansion is situated directly over a heavily used regional aquifer. The aquifer is considered a recharge area. Although it is not a regulated recharge area, it should be due to the critical role it plays in our drinking water supply. This aquifer feeds into the nearby Iroquois River. The Iroquois joins the Kankakee River a few miles down. The Kankakee River is the third-cleanest river in Illinois and is the primary source of drinking water for more than 60,000 people in Kankakee County. In addition, Consumers Illinois Water Company, our local provider of water, has entered into an agreement to pipe Kankakee River water as far north as University Park in Will County, which is approximately 30 miles away.

It is not a question of if, but a question of when, a landfill will leak. No testimony was entered refuting that information. Situating this landfill on top of this heavily used aquifer poses a long-term threat to the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of Kankakee County. Once a contaminant infiltrates an aquifer, the genie has been let out of the bottle. The cost of trying to remedy this would be prohibitive, let alone the risks of exposing future generations to toxic chemicals, some of whose risk factors are unknown today.

(continued)

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New technologies, including closed loop gasification and thermal depolymerization processing, are rapidly coming online or in advanced stages of research and development. We are on the threshold of breakthroughs that will render massive regional landfills obsolete. The prudent course of action at this time is to explore and expand these technologies. Situating more regional landfills for short-term economic gain, at the cost of costly, long-term environmental damage will do greater harm. No matter how many liners are proposed, the bottom line is that liners tear and eventually leak. Our greatest natural resource, the Kankakee River, deserves to be protected.

Having sat through hours of testimony presented by both sides, the evidence presented clearly pointed to the long-term hazards this development will create. Under questioning, testimony by expert witness Charles Norris, a hydrogeologist, indicated that the proposed expansion is "absolutely" situated above a heavily used aquifer. This proposal not only is contradictory to Criterion 2, but also to Criterion 8, which mandates that any proposed solid waste landfill conform to the county's solid waste plan.

The Kankakee County Solid Waste Plan clearly prohibits situating a solid waste landfill above or near a groundwater recharge zone or a heavily used aquifer. Although the aquifer is not a regulated recharge area, it clearly is heavily used, as it is part of the drinking water supply for the majority of Kankakee County residents. The Waste Management proposed landfill expansion directly and clearly contradicts our SWP. And at this point in time, there is no foolproof technology to deal with failures of liners.

In addition, the proposal also fails to meet Criterion 8, which requires public involvement in the siting of a solid waste landfill. As a member of the Kankakee County Board, I can attest to the fact that several secret, closed-door meetings were held between certain county staff members, a handful of county board members and Waste Management representatives. This proposal was then dumped in our laps.

I urge you to deny approval of this application and protect our natural resources for generations to come.

Regards,



Ann Bernard,
Member, Kankakee County Board