



STATE OF NEW YORK
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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Albany, New York 12203-3399

Barbara A. DeBuono, M.D., M.P.H.
Commissioner

Dennis P. Whalen
Executive Deputy Commissioner

RECEIVED

July 11, 1997

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NYS Health Department
Buffalo Regional Office

Ms. Janette Pfeiff
Supervisor, Town of Seneca Falls
10 Fall Street
Seneca Falls, New York 13148

Re: Health Effects from Landfill Gas
Seneca Meadows Landfill
Site #850009
Seneca Falls, Seneca County

Dear Ms. Pfeiff:

I just received a copy of a letter sent to you by Mr. James A. Daigler, Manager of Engineering Services, Seneca Meadows, Inc. Please note that Mr. Daigler's letter does not accurately represent my views regarding the potential for adverse health effects due to exposure to air emissions from the Seneca Meadows facility.

The air study currently being undertaken by a consultant to Seneca Meadows, Inc. includes both air modeling and off-site air sampling. If successful, the study will provide a much more comprehensive assessment of air contamination around the landfill than has been available in the past. I would stress, however, that regardless of air contaminant levels predicted by air models or observed in air samples collected around the landfill, it is possible for extreme landfill odors to cause adverse health effects in exposed individuals. The air study is not intended to test the veracity of citizens' health complaints, as Mr. Daigler's letter implies. Rather, the consultant's investigations will help to answer citizens' questions regarding the potential for landfill-generated air contaminants to exceed relevant air guidelines and standards in off-site air.

For example, citizens have repeatedly expressed concerns about exposure to landfill-generated hydrogen sulfide. Air surveys that I conducted several months ago found elevated levels of hydrogen sulfide in air downwind of the Seneca Meadows facility. With the installation of a landfill gas collection system at the facility, it is possible that hydrogen sulfide no longer reaches elevated levels in downwind air. The current investigations, if successful, will provide data with which to evaluate the potential for exposure to landfill-generated hydrogen sulfide.

I would like to reiterate that the Seneca Meadows air study cannot be used to infer that

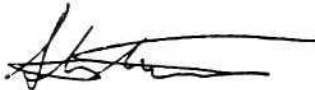
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Re: Seneca Meadows Landfill

citizen's complaints about adverse health effects from exposure to extreme odors are groundless. Landfill gas contains a large number of chemicals, some of which are difficult to quantify and difficult to evaluate from a toxicologic perspective. No air study, no matter how well planned and implemented, can quantify and evaluate every potential toxin in landfill gas. Regardless of the study results, I will continue to recommend that Seneca Meadows, Inc. upgrade the landfill gas collection system and institute operating procedures that reduce to a minimum the incidence of foul odors around the Seneca Meadows facility.

I cannot comment on the air study results at this time because the study is not finished and I have yet to receive a final report from the consultant. Any speculation regarding the conclusions that may or may not be reached upon completion of these investigations would be irresponsible and not in the public interest.

Please feel free to telephone me at (518) 458-6309 if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,



Stephen J. Shost
Public Health Specialist II
Bureau of Environmental Exposure
Investigation

cc: Dr. G.A. Carlson
Mr. M. VanValkenburg
Mr. D. Napier - RFO
Mr. C. Carroll/Mr. B. Dombrowski - SCHD
Mr. A. Butkas/Mr. J. Swanson/Mr. M. Gillette/Mr. J. Craft - DEC Reg. 8
Mr. J. Daigler - SMI
Mr. S. Wilsey - EMCON

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