

DOCKET NUMBER
PROPOSED RULE **PR 20**
(64FR35090)

617

7320 Barberry Lane
Manlius, NY 13104

December 22, 1999 08:27 P5:51

NRC Chairman Richard Meserve
Attention: Rulemaking and Adjudications Staff
U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555

Hello Chairman Richard Meserve:

I understand from a friend that the N.R.C. is accepting comments from the Public on its plans to allow sale of radioactive steel etc. from nuclear and weapons plants etc. to steel reprocessing plants around the United States--- for reprocessing into steel products for re-use here.

IT IS A TERRIBLE IDEA! IT SHOULD BE ILLEGAL!

I say this with complete conviction! I (and several friends) are able to perceive low levels of ionizing radiation.^x In mid-May, 1993, we began to feel the presence of such low-levels of radiation. I feel the radiation on my skin and mucous membranes. Some of my friends feel it especially in their lungs and throats. We began asking what the radiation was and where it was coming from. A small front page news article in a local newspaper told us that it was from the Auburn, New York Steel Reprocessing Plant "Austeel", and that it would continue for two or three more weeks for "economic" reasons. Representatives from the N.R.C. were there and supervising or investigating it and that it was all very harmless to health. A friend later discovered that it had come from a nuclear power plant in New Jersey, was sold to Austeel in Syracuse in April, 1993.

I continued to feel the radiation until the end of the stated period of reprocessing---and, every Saturday and Sunday through the middle of July. The end of the week the plant's bag-house collectors were apparently purged.

I wrote letters to New York State's official radiation monitoring group in Albany asking whether they were aware of the enormous amount of low-level but unhealthy

x U238, I believe

PDR PR 20 64FR 35090

DS10

stinging radiation coming from Austeel, and that their bag-house collectors were still emitting it into late-July. The monitoring group did not reply to my several inquiries until late July or early August. Then the letter was mostly curt denial of everything and a suggestion that I was strange.

The radiation was especially noticeable to me in the local strawberries ripened in July and in the local apple crop ripening in the early fall. These fruits stung my mouth, throat, stomach and even whole body. I do not drink milk---but, expect that the cows of our area were concentrating the radiation for the babies here. Skaneateles Lake is about 5-7 miles downwind of Austeel. It is the major source of drinking water for much of the city of Syracuse, NY and Onondaga County. Fortunately, we had a deep well. If I drank any city water however, I'd awaken at 2 AM at night, my mouth, throat and stomach stinging.

A friend who taught Kindergarten in a Liverpool, NY school commented in late June about how sick all her children had been this year. Every year, she said, there would be a few children suffering from "allergies". This year every single one of the children was coughing, sneezing, had watery eyes, sore throats, raspy voices and wheezed. Some of the children even had fevers. She had not noticed the two or three small articles in our local daily newspapers, describing Austeel's radioactivity.

On trips to local stores, banks etc., I often overheard people talking about their strange, long-lasting upper respiratory "infections" which antibiotics were not curing. They talked of more people suffering from summer pneumonias. Physicians also talked of having enormous numbers of patients with these symptoms. You would think that the Public Health official(s) in Syracuse and the State would have been conducting intensive research into this strange, unseasonable outbreak of respiratory illnesses. But, no. They did not---or, it was never reported in the media.

This is why I say emphatically---that re-processing radioactive steel from old nuclear or nuclear-weapons plants is a terrible idea! It ought to be illegal, a blight on the conscience of any official or C.E.O. promoting it---a blight forever!

I am mailing copies of this letter to medical groups.

Sincerely,

Jessie Ashley