

# EXTRACTIONS



a newsletter from O'CONNOR ASSOCIATES

Number 3, December 1987

## **CONTAMINATION IN THE GRAND CAYMANS**

Product marketing requires constant innovation. A case in point is the approach taken by the University of Waterloo's Department of Earth Sciences. Faced with the task of luring students to a course on contaminant transport, organizers rejected the usual cosy descriptions of campus life and opted instead for the attractions of world-famous Seven Mile Beach on Grand Cayman Island. Waterloo's **Short Course on Organic Contaminants in Ground Water** will be presented at the luxurious Treasure Island Resort on Grand Cayman Island in the British West Indies, December 7-11, 1987. Course work will include "comprehensive coverage of hydrogeology relevant to organic contaminants." Organizers claim there will be ample opportunity for informal discussion and relaxed enjoyment of the Caribbean location. Who could doubt that? Further information may be obtained by contacting Dr. J.F. Barker at the Institute for Groundwater Research, University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario N2L 3G1 (519) 885-1211.

## **REGISTRY OF TANK TESTERS**

Environment Canada is completing a registry of companies able to conduct precision tank testing. Firms with tank testing expertise that wish to be included in the registry should contact Mr. K. Karr, Industrial Programs Branch, Conservation and Protection, Environment Canada, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0L1 (819) 953-1125.

## **BIDDING PROCESS KNOCKED**

Is the use of cost-based bidding to obtain engineering services a wise practice? The answer is *No* according to H.K. Deeprise, chairman of the Practice Standards Committee of the Association of Professional Engineers, Geologists and Geophysicists of Alberta (APEGGA). Deeprise bases his contention on results from an APEGGA-sponsored survey which produced evidence supporting the conclusion that the bidding process now widely used is detrimental to the public in cost/benefit terms. While there is little doubt that obtaining engineering talent through cost-

based bidding is the most expedient and politically palatable method available to purchasers, the approach has serious shortcomings. Bidding forces the number of man-hours spent on a task to an absolute minimum and encourages the use of engineers with the lowest acceptable levels of experience. According to Deeprise, strong arguments can be made to support the contention that engineers involved in soliciting the services of other engineers on the basis of fees rather than qualifications may be ignoring their codified responsibility to protect the public's welfare.

## **CHANGES IN REQUIREMENTS FOR HAZARDOUS MATERIAL PACKAGING**

Changes in Part VI of Canada's Transportation of Dangerous Goods Regulations are being proposed in order to create a set of better organized and more clearly written regulations. Proposed amendments deal with safety standards for the manufacture, testing, requalification, and marking of containers used for hazardous materials. Details of the proposed changes are included in the August 19, 1987 issue of *Canada Gazette*.

## **SAVING EARTH'S WRAPPER**

Fast food giant McDonald's has announced it will no longer use foam containers. The firm's move is in response to concern that chlorofluorocarbons used in the manufacture of foam containers are causing reductions in the earth's ozone layer. In response to the announcement by McDonald's, an editorial writer for the Regina Leader-Post noted that with the world's population now over five billion, McDonald's will truly have cause to claim "over five billion" served.

## **LANDFILL RESTRICTIONS IN ALBERTA**

A number of changes to regulations governing hazardous wastes in Alberta are presently under review. If approved, the new regulations will limit the kinds of materials that may be legally landfilled in the province. Proposed changes will

prohibit landfilling of the following:

- any liquid or solid waste containing tri-, tetra-, or pentachlorophenol at a concentration greater than 1000 mg/L
- liquid wastes containing free cyanides in concentrations greater than 1000 mg/L
- wastes or spoils (soil, sand, gravel, etc.) carrying more than 50 mg/L polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs)
- wastes with a pH less than 2.0

- liquid wastes containing any of the following elemental contaminants at concentrations equal to or greater than shown:

|          |          |
|----------|----------|
| arsenic  | 500 mg/L |
| cadmium  | 100 mg/L |
| chromium | 500 mg/L |
| lead     | 500 mg/L |
| mercury  | 20 mg/L  |
| nickel   | 134 mg/L |
| selenium | 100 mg/L |
| thallium | 130 mg/L |

- liquid or solid wastes which contain any of the following organic solvents at a concentration greater than 1000 mg/L:

- acetone
- benzene
- n-butyl alcohol
- carbon disulphide
- carbon tetrachloride
- chlorobenzene
- cresols and cresylic acid
- cyclohexanone
- ethyl acetate
- ethyl benzene
- ethyl ether
- isobutanol
- methanol
- methylene chloride
- methyl ethyl ketone
- methyl isobutyl ketone
- nitrobenzene
- 2-nitropropane
- pyridine
- tetrachloroethylene
- toluene
- 1,1,1 and 1,1,2 - trichloroethane
- trichloroethylene
- xylenes

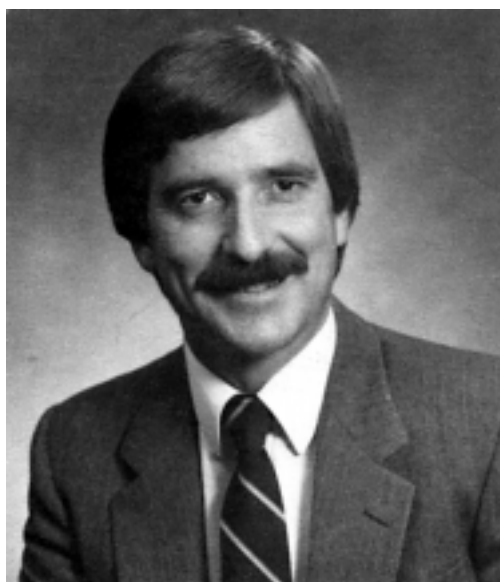
In addition, liquid wastes identified as “hazardous” may not be placed in a landfill unless the landfill has two liners (one of which is a synthetic material), a leachate collection and

removal system, a leak detection system between the liners, and a groundwater monitoring system.

## PUBLICATIONS

A Green Paper calling for reform of the federal government’s Environmental Assessment and Review Process (EARP) has been released by Environment Minister Tom McMillan. Copies of the discussion paper entitled *Reforming Federal Environment Assessment* are being sent to groups, individuals, and provincial governments for comment. Consultative meetings will be arranged at a later date. Copies of the paper and further information may be obtained by contacting Douglas Parkinson, 13th Floor, Fontaine Building, Hull, Quebec K1A 0H3 (819) 997-2727.

## O’CONNOR UPDATE



Graham Hawkins, a waste management engineer experienced in the investigation of contaminated sites, has joined O’Connor Associates in Calgary. Graham co-authored the widely-used *Guide to the Environmental Aspects of Decommissioning Industrial Sites* published by Environment Canada. His expertise strengthens the firm’s waste management capabilities.

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