

EXTRACTIONS



a newsletter from O'CONNOR ASSOCIATES

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WASTE IS DOWN

U.S. chemical plants are producing less hazardous waste, says a study commissioned by the Chemical Manufacturers Association. A study of 211 plants found that the amount of solid hazardous waste generated decreased 56% since 1981, while wastewater volume decreased by 10%.

Reasons: More companies are disposing of their waste through recycling, deep well injection, and incineration.

Interesting: Use of landfills decreased by 65% between 1981 and 1986.

REAL ESTATE VALUES CHANGE

A recent study asked real estate experts to estimate the impacts on an industrial park facility that had been affected by migrating methane gas and contaminated groundwater from an adjacent landfill site. The results:

- More than half said rents would decrease by 20% and vacancy rates increase to 10% from the standard 5%.
- Nearly 75% said they would not finance the contaminated property.
- About 65% said the mortgage interest rate could increase by three percentage points.
- Nearly half said that the typical loan-to-value ratio would decrease from 75% to between 45% and 60%.
- Migrating contaminants would increase expenses such as insurance and professional services.

Bill Munday, Counselor of Real Estate, presented the survey results at the annual convention of the American Society of Real Estate Counselors. The society was formed in 1953 to establish professional standards for those who provide expert, independent real estate advice.

PROVINCIAL HARMONY

Quebec aims to harmonize its environmental laws with those of Ontario. It wants to prevent companies fleeing one province or the other to avoid new stringent anti-pollution standards. Quebec will dramatically revise its policies and create a \$50 million research fund to develop energy-saving and pollution-reducing methods for industry in the province. Companies that fail to meet environmental standards will not get provincial grants. Also, the province will not buy products from companies that pollute but will favour those that take recycling initiatives.

GIFTS ENVIRONMENTALLY ASSESSED

The Salvation Army's Eastern U.S. Division has begun to refuse real estate donations unless the donor first conducts an environmental assessment of the property. Other charitable organizations are looking at potential problems with their donated sites. Goodwill Industries has asked a Chicago court to rescind its agreement with the donor of an eight acre site of a former paint factory, since even a portion of the cleanup costs could bankrupt the independent charity. Non-cash donations, including real estate, have represented 20% of corporate giving since 1984, up from 11% in 1983.

DON'T PLAY IN THE TRAFFIC

Air pollution inside cars travelling on congested highways is four times higher than that outside, says a study by the South Coast Air Quality Management District in southern California.

Most dangerous: Slow moving vehicles, since inside air pollutants rise when vehicles are travelling less than 40 km/hr.

NEW B.C. WASTE STRATEGY B.C.

Environment Minister John Reynolds has announced cabinet approval for a strategy to deal with the 110 000 tonnes of hazardous waste generated annually in the province. The plan will have an annual budget of \$6.5 million. A treatment facility to dispose of over 400 000 tonnes already in storage is included. Reynolds says, "The main priority of the strategy is to ensure that the total volume of hazardous waste in the province is reduced through source controls, recycling, and re-use."

APEGGA GOES GREEN

The Council of the Association of Professional Engineers, Geologists, and Geophysicists of Alberta (APEGGA) has accepted the report of the APEGGA Task Force on the Environment for discussion and further review. The Council directed the association to establish a standing committee on the environment. Among other things, the report says:

- Environmental planning is cost-effective.
- For APEGGA to be recognized as an association that is sensitive to society's concern its members must be proactive in environmental protection.
- APEGGA will adopt environmental guidelines for the membership by 1991.
- APEGGA will include standards for environmental qualifications in the syllabus for registration by 1992.

BASELINE DATA ARE SPARSE

Although 40% of Canadian municipalities use groundwater, most do not know what industrial organic chemicals the water contains. Because historically there have been no limits for the concentration of contaminants such as tetrachloroethylene in federal or provincial drinking water guidelines, testers seldom analyzed well waters for these chemicals. John Cherry, a member of the Waterloo Centre for Groundwater Research at the University of Waterloo, notes that federal funding has decreased since 1987 and that the number of groundwater researchers in Environment Canada has declined to fewer than 10 from more than 20 in 1984. He warns that every year of inaction by Canada on groundwater protection adds untold millions of dollars to future costs.

HEARINGS BEGIN

Hearings have started to decide whether the Ontario Waste Management Corporation (OWMC) can build a \$285 million toxic waste disposal facility near the southern Ontario farming community of Smithville. The hearings probably will continue for two years. OWMC has spent almost \$80 million locating and designing the facility to process as much as a million tonnes of hazardous waste annually. OWMC selected Smithville for the area's layer of clay, which may prevent the seepage of contaminants into the groundwater.

PUBLICATIONS

Groundwater Contamination: Use of Models in Decision Making, edited by G. Jousma et al., contains the proceedings of a international conference held October, 1987, in Amsterdam. The book evaluates the state-of-the-art of model use in the decision-making process and discusses the role and needs of decision makers, managers, and professionals in this process. It highlights the present experience with models in regulation, management, and risk assessment. Several papers deal with hazardous waste management and regional groundwater contamination studies. Other papers fully cover developments in technical fields such as modelling geochemical processes and fractured rock aquifers. The 688-page proceedings are available for U.S. \$125 from Kluwer Academic Publishers, 101 Philip Drive, Norwell, MA 02061, U.S.A. (617) 871-6600.

FEDERAL SUPPORT OFFERED

Federal Environment Minister Lucien Bouchard has offered the provinces \$100 million to help clean up about 1 000 toxic waste sites in Canada. About 50 of these have been abandoned; the provinces would have to pressure industry to clean up the other 95% of the sites where the owners are known. Bouchard estimates the total cost of cleanup in Canada to be at least \$5 billion.

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