



RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
LANSING



C. HEIDI GRETHUR
DIRECTOR

May 31, 2018

The Honorable Rose Mary C. Robinson
State Representative
State Capitol
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, Michigan 48909-7514

Dear Representative Robinson:

Thank you for your letters of May 2, 2018, to Governor Rick Snyder and me, requesting an additional public hearing on the relicensing and the proposed expansion of the US Ecology Michigan, Inc. (USE), hazardous waste storage and treatment facility at 6520 Georgia Street in Detroit.

The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is committed to protecting public health and safety of the people of Michigan and the environment in which they live.

As you note, we are in the process of finalizing the renewal of USE's hazardous waste management facility operating license (license). We are working with the United States Environmental Protection Agency and USE to resolve several issues and to craft a license that is protective of public health and safety. We anticipate resolving those issues in the next several weeks and, if resolved, then reissuing the license in early June 2018. We have modified the license in response to the multitude of comments we received from the public, within the scope of our authority under the federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976 and Part 111, Hazardous Waste Management, of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, as amended (NREPA).

There are no additional public hearings or meetings currently scheduled regarding the reissuance of the USE facility's license. We have facilitated expanded public participation with multiple public meetings/hearings and have extended the public comment period several times for this renewal license action beyond what is required by law. We have met with members of the local community multiple times. These meetings were arranged by the Coalition to Oppose the Expansion of US Ecology, and we intend to continue meeting after the license is renewed. We have a Web page with information about the history of this facility, along with the renewal and proposed expansion, at: https://www.michigan.gov/deq/0,4561,7-135-3312_4118_4240-359331--,00.html. This licensing process has been ongoing for five years with multiple opportunities for input, and we do not believe an additional hearing will lead to an improved license. We know this is a contentious issue and are always available to talk with you about USE and your concerns now and in the future.

Toward that end, we offer the following responses to your concerns related to the USE operations and proposed expansion:

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As you know, the property has been continuously operating as an industrial complex since the 1950s. It has been operating as a hazardous waste storage and treatment facility since the mid-1970s, as Waste Acid Services, Dynecol, and now USE. USE is currently licensed to operate under Part 115, Solid Waste Management, of the NREPA, and Part 111. The DEQ is proceeding cautiously and consistently with state and federal laws to renew USE's license under Part 111. If issued, the renewed license will consist of existing operations and the proposed expansion operations. The license authorized under Part 111, if issued, will require standards protective of public health and the environment.

USE is a permitted centralized waste treatment facility with the Great Lakes Water Authority, historically Detroit Water and Sewerage Department, and is subject to the standards of the Industrial Pretreatment Program. This means that prior to discharge, the wastewater is treated on-site to reduce pollutants to levels that are protective of the sewage treatment facility and to ensure its discharge to the sewer does not threaten the sewer system's workers and the public.

USE has accepted technologically enhanced naturally occurring radioactive material (TENORM), which is not regulated as a hazardous waste. Rather, TENORM is regulated as a solid waste under a separate license with similar controls as the Part 111 license. USE has voluntarily stopped accepting TENORM at this facility; however, in accordance with state and federal law, USE could resume acceptance of this material. When this material was being managed at USE, there are no known instances where members of the community were exposed to radiation from this low activity material, which was solidified and then shipped off-site for disposal. There were no known discharges of this material to the sewer.

If your constituents are concerned about exposure to radioactive materials, we recommend that they test their homes for radon. Radon is often cited as the leading cause of cancer among nonsmokers and is the largest contributor to exposures from naturally occurring radiation.

Should you have any further questions, please contact Mr. Jack Schinderle, Director, Waste Management and Radiological Protection Division, at 517-284-6551; schinderlej@michigan.gov; or DEQ, P.O. Box 30241, Lansing, Michigan 48909-7741.

Sincerely,



C. Heidi Grether
Director
517-284-6700

cc: Governor Rick Snyder
Mr. Michael McClellan, Environment Deputy Director, DEQ
Ms. Sarah M. Howes, Legislative Liaison, DEQ
Mr. Jack Schinderle, DEQ
Mr. Lonnie Lee, DEQ
Mr. Allan Taylor, DEQ
Ms. Tracy Kecskemeti, DEQ
Mr. Richard Conforti, DEQ