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LANSING



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VIA E-MAIL

TO: Governor Rick Snyder
Senate Natural Resources, Environment, and Great Lakes Committee Members
House Natural Resources, Tourism, and Outdoor Recreation Committee Members

FROM: Dan Wyant, Director *Dan Wyant*

DATE: March 6, 2012

SUBJECT: Report on the Low-Level Radioactive Waste 2010 Survey

In accordance with Section 18a of the Low-Level Radioactive Waste Authority Act, 1987 PA 204, as amended, generators of low-level radioactive waste (LLRW) are required to report annually to the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Low-Level Radioactive Waste Authority, certain information on the volume, type, and activity of the LLRW produced. This report is a brief summary of the information submitted by generators for waste disposed in calendar year 2010.

Twenty-five facilities reported that they generated waste requiring off-site disposal. The following table compares 2010 data with that of 2009.

Type of Facility	Number of Facilities Reporting Waste in 2010	Volume of LLRW Generated in 2010 (ft ³)	Number of Facilities Reporting Waste in 2009	Volume of LLRW Generated in 2009 (ft ³)
Academic	9	1,655	7	7,149
Government	1	1	2	12
Industry	4	588	6	1,686
Medical	7	2,379	3	10
Utility	4	48,622	4	111,258
Total	25	53,245	22	120,115

The high medical waste volume generated in 2010 was primarily due to the decommissioning of a cyclotron that produced radioactive material used for positron emission tomography (PET) imaging.

In 2009 several facility categories were higher than normal. The volume for academic waste was high due to decommissioning activities at the PET Cyclotron and the Ford Nuclear Reactor at the University of Michigan. The volume for utility waste was high due to decommissioning activities at the Fermi I plant and refueling outages at the D.C. Cook and Palisades plants. The volume of industry waste was high due to the decommissioning of two research facilities.

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LLRW is categorized in Classes. Class A waste comprises the largest volume of LLRW. Michigan waste generators can ship Class A waste to a licensed disposal facility in Utah. Certain organic chemicals and animal carcasses containing low concentrations of certain radioactive materials can also be shipped to licensed out-of-state facilities for incineration. Class B and C wastes are generated in much smaller volumes than Class A waste, but have significantly more radioactivity than Class A waste.

In 2008 the Energy Solutions disposal facility in Barnwell, South Carolina, stopped receiving LLRW from all states that were not part of the Atlantic Low-Level Waste Compact (South Carolina, New Jersey, and Connecticut). Under the provisions of the federal Low-Level Radioactive Waste Policy Act of 1980, Public Law 96-573 (LLRWPA), an interstate compact can restrict access to only its member states. This disposal facility in South Carolina had been the only facility in the nation that would accept Class B and C waste from Michigan and 35 other states. Because of this loss of access, Michigan generators currently have no disposal option for Class B and C wastes. Two Michigan utilities reported that they generated 493 cubic feet of Class B or C waste in 2010. In total, Michigan utilities have 1,290 cubic feet of Class B and C waste in storage at their facilities.

The lack of a disposal option for Class B and C wastes does not pose an imminent health or safety problem for Michigan residents and should not significantly affect the facilities storing such wastes. These facilities are licensees of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, which regularly inspects their operations, including waste management and storage practices.

The fact that waste generators in 36 states have no disposal option for such waste does suggest that the national framework for managing and assuring disposal of radioactive waste, established under the LLRWPA, is not working. In the long-term, a disposal option will need to be found.

If you need further information, please contact Bob Skowronek, Radiological Protection Section, Resource Management Division, at 517-241-1253 or skowronekr@michigan.gov; or you may contact me at 517-373-7917.

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