



SQUIBB RCRA INCINERATOR PERMIT RENEWAL HUMACAO, PUERTO RICO

RCRA FACILITY UPDATE

MAY 1997

This update is prepared as a part of EPA's on-going effort to facilitate public participation in the decision-making process for the Squibb, Humacao incinerator permit renewal.

STATUS OF PRE-TRIAL BURN

Squibb started preliminary testing of their three incinerators (i.e., Trane, Caloric I, and II) on April 23. These preliminary tests are necessary to bring the incinerators to normal operating conditions in preparation for the trial burn, which is tentatively planned for August 1997. During the pre-test, sample wastes are introduced into the incinerators, the waste feed system is checked, instruments are calibrated, and other necessary preparations are conducted. EQB personnel were present and observed the pre-test activities which ended on May 1, 1997.

FOLLOW-UP TO ISSUES RAISED AT MARCH PUBLIC MEETING

EPA met with concerned members of the community around the Squibb facility on March 13, 1997. The purpose of the meeting was to: provide the public with information to understand the permitting process and the technical details about Squibb's incinerator; advise the public of upcoming trial burn activities; present an opportunity to voice concerns and ask questions; and establish and on-going, dialogue between EPA and the affected community.

The following are some of the concerns that were raised at the meeting and required additional follow-up by EPA.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Professor Sonia Vasquez, University of PR at Humacao, and member of Organization of Eastern Environmental Communities (OCAE) submitted her comments regarding the draft Risk Assessment to EPA on April 24th.

EPA's risk assessment expert is currently reviewing the draft Risk Assessment and is scheduled to complete his review of the document, as well as Professor Vasquez's comments in June. EPA plans to meet with the public to discuss the details of the risk assessment process. This meeting is tentatively scheduled for late August 1997. The risk assessment supports the permit application and will be subject to a formal public comment period, when EPA issues a draft permit (currently planned for January 1998)

WASTE MINIMIZATION

At the meeting EPA agreed to provide additional information on hazardous waste reduction activities at Squibb facility. As part of Squibb's current permit conditions, the facility agreed to undertake pollution prevention and waste minimization efforts. Squibb must report annually to EPA on their efforts to reduce the amount of hazardous wastes generated at the Humaco facility. Attached is a copy of Squibb's "Annual Waste Minimization Certification." It shows a significant decrease in the total volume of hazardous waste incinerated since the original permit was issued in 1990. In 1996, the amount of waste incinerated at site has been reduced by 40 % from the pre-1990 level.

DRAFT SPANISH SUMMARY OF PERMIT APPLICATION

A simplified version of the Squibb's Part-B permit application was prepared by Squibb. The purpose of this document is to facilitate public involvement in the permitting process by presenting very complex information in a manner that could be more readily understood by the general public. The summary provides

sufficient information to understand the fundamental aspects of each element of the permit application . The abbreviated document is written in both Spanish and in English, and is available at the information repository specifically established for the Squibb facility at the Humacao Public Library. You can also obtain a copy of the simplified Part-B by directly contacting either Eng. Nancy Melendez of EQB at 766-2817 or Eng. Julio Ortiz of Squibb at 850-6731. Please note, these documents are drafts and subject to further revision based on final comments from EPA on the permit application. In addition, the public will have an opportunity to comment on the draft permit, when it is public noticed by EPA.

HEALTH- RELATED ISSUES

The community requested that the federal government conduct epidemiological studies of the Humacao community. EPA explained that it uses the risk assessment process to evaluate the risk posed by an operating incinerator. However, EPA agreed to relay the request to the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), which is part of the federal Public Health Service. EPA will keep the public informed of any progress of ATSDR involvement.

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