Colbert COLSF 14.1 V1

MAY 21, 1990

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MAY 25 1990
SUPERFUND BRANCH

Mr. Neil Thompson, Project Manager
United States Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Sixth Avenue
Seattle, Washington

Dear Mr. Thompson, Neil!

At the April 26 CLCAC meeting we resolved that at our next meeting we would review our concerns about the "sampling problem" and formalize them in a letter to you. The meeting was held on May 17; in addition to our normal attendees there were two representatives from Ecology.

As we had shared with you earlier, our initial feelings about the County's response to the concerns set out in our February 14 letter was favorable. There was a flurry of activity and the County admitted culpability in "sampling" (b) (6) well. Since that time, however, our concerns have been raised again.

At the meeting you attended on April 26, it was apparent that the entire sampling process is suspect and that there are little if any quality standards built into any level of the water testing program. Given the magnitude of the problems our committee has identified and given the mandate of compliance built into the consent decree, the committee is very unhappy with the slow response in correcting the problems. The committee is also frustrated with the rather cavalier attitude of the County in maintaining open and ready communication with the community; the County's response was seen as patronizing. It was our understanding that the community would receive frequent news letters from the county and in addition we were advised by Ecology (Mike Blum) that there would be space in the news letter for a small article from CLCAC. We were informed in no uncertain terms that there would be no input in the newsletter. We are still waiting for a newsletter. Neither situation is justifiable nor acceptable.

Two more specific instances of sampling/testing deficiencies have been identified. The (b) (6) well was sampled and the holding time before testing was exceeded. I will enclose a letter from (b) (6) which speaks for itself. The (b) (6) well was sampled and the custody record indicates that the sample was received <u>before</u> the well was tested. Obviously the process is very sloppy.

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The committee is at this time formally requesting assistance from EPA and/or Ecology to evaluate and rectify the water sampling process for the residential wells in the Colbert area. We are not concerned with the project operation, but do feel that some alternative independent residential sampling directly under your supervision is warranted. We are also formally requesting assistance in enhancing the communication from County. We have a need and a right to know. We need reassurance that the problems we have identified are being rectified, that they will not occur in the future. We also wish an opportunity to participate in the newsletter. There is no reason to deny this forum to us. We have gone on record many times that we wish to participate with the County in all areas. We do not want to develop and maintain an adversarial relationship. We will, however, maintain a watchdog stance. As we have stated many times, we drink the water.

Please advise us of what options are open to us at this time. We will continue to communicate with you on a regular basis. The committee is comfortable with continued participation from EPA and Ecology at our meetings. We will inform your office of upcoming meeting times and dates.

Sincerely yours,

(b) (6)

(b) (6)

Chair, CLCAC

cc: Committee
Ecology
Spokane County