



UNITED STATES  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

June 25, 2018

Jason El-Zein, Branch Chief  
USEPA Large Lakes Research Station/ORD  
USEPA Region 5 Emergency Response # 1  
9311 Groh Road  
Mail Code: SE-GI  
Grosse Ile, MI 48138-1697

SUBJECT: FORMER NOVELTY MANUFACTURING COMPANY PROPERTY AT 528  
NORTH MECHANIC STREET

Dear Mr. El-Zein:

I am writing to provide you with the information the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff has regarding the property at 528 North Mechanic Street, Jackson, Michigan. As discussed in our letter to the Jackson County Treasurer dated October 6, 2016,<sup>1</sup> our records indicate the property was previously used by the Novelty Manufacturing Company. Specifically, based on publicly available information, it was thought that the property was used in the manufacturing of "X-Radium" foot warmer heaters. The advertisement for this product said that the radium in the foot warmer "absorbs heat like a sponge absorbs water." It was believed at the time that these foot warmers contained radium-226 (Ra-226), a radioactive isotope that, in certain quantities, may pose a risk to public health and safety. Ra-226 is regulated by the NRC.

Following issuance of the letter, the staff had conversations with the Jackson County Treasurer's Office regarding current ownership of the property. It was then brought to the staff's attention that the property was also of interest to your Branch in the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) program for potential listing on the National Priorities List. Following this determination, the staff reached out to contacts within your Branch to determine a path forward for the property. During these calls, it was discussed that the X-Radium foot warmer most likely did not contain Ra-226 and Ra-226 was most likely not used at this site.

Following these discussions, inspectors from the NRC's Region III Office worked with Mr. Eugene Jablonowski to conduct a radiological survey of the property. During this survey, the NRC inspector used a Sodium Iodide detector and performed a survey of the outdoor area on North Mechanic Street. The NRC inspector surveyed approximately 90 percent of the area and found no presence of Ra-226 contamination or any foot warmers that might contain Ra-226. Based on the results of this survey, the staff concludes that there is no indication of discrete sources of Ra-226 on the portions of the property that were surveyed.

Given the staff did not identify any Ra-226 at the property during its survey, no further coordination by the EPA with the NRC is necessary for the Novelty Manufacturing Company site.

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<sup>1</sup> Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) Accession No. ML16277A253.

Additionally, no further actions are required from the Jackson County Treasurer's Office concerning the NRC's interest in this site.

In accordance with Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* Section 2.390 of the NRC's "Agency Rules of Practice and Procedure," a copy of this letter will be available electronically for public inspection in the NRC Public Document Room or from the Publicly Available Records component of NRC's ADAMS. ADAMS is accessible from the NRC Web site at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html>.

If you have any questions concerning this letter, please contact Mr. Stephen Koenick, Chief, Materials Decommissioning Branch, Division of Decommissioning, Uranium Recovery and Waste Programs, Office of Nuclear Materials Safety and Safeguards, at (301) 415-6631, or Mr. Jeffrey Whited, Project Manager, at (301) 415-4090.

Sincerely,

**/RA/ M. Sampson for**

John R. Tappert, Director  
Division of Decommissioning, Uranium Recovery  
and Waste Programs  
Office of Nuclear Material Safety  
and Safeguards

Docket No.: 03038974

cc:

Jackson County Treasurer  
120 W Michigan Avenue  
Jackson, Michigan 49201  
Attn: Treasurer, Second Floor

Jeff Kimble, On-Scene Coordinator  
USEPA Large Lakes Research Station/ORD  
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Eugene Jablonowski, Health Physicist  
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Mail Code: SMF-5J  
Chicago, IL 60604-3507

SUBJECT: FORMER NOVELTY MANUFACTURING COMPANY PROPERTY AT 528  
NORTH MECHANIC STREET, DATED JUNE 25, 2018

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**\*via e-mail**

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