A Look At Waste Disposers Considering N.C.

Daily News Staff Report

Here is a look at the hazardous waste management companies considering North Carolina:

● Boston-based SCA Services was formed in 1969 and grew through acquisitions to revenues last year of $228 million, of which $28 million came from chemical waste disposal. It operates garbage services and landfills in 33 states as well as providing hazardous waste disposal. It has encountered trouble with a variety of local, state and federal government agencies.

SCA has applied for a North Carolina permit to operate a volume reduction, detoxification, waste-water treatment, incineration and reclamation plant capable of handling 26 million gallons of hazardous waste annually at Arrowood Industrial Park near Charlotte. A public hearing and state review must precede any plant opening.

The U.S. attorney for New Jersey filed suit against the company and nine other defendants last year, asking $1 million in damages, $630,000 in penalties and a cleanup of dangerous chemicals seeping into the Raritan River in Edison, N.J.

The suit alleges that SCA formed a partnership with the company operating the Kin-Buc landfill in 1975, according to Patrick Nucciarone, assistant U.S. attorney. That agreement lasted nine months before the state ordered the site closed, he said. From 1973 to 1976 the site received 70 million gallons of liquid wastes, including carcinogenic PCBs and benzene, which were mixed with municipal refuse and seeped into the river, he said.

"The theory of the operation was that solid waste would soak it up," he said. "The most incredible part was that it was on a tidal marshland and less than 500 feet from a river."

Nucciarone said the complex ownership arrangement took three years to trace before suit could be brought. "They (SCA) were trying to expand so fast they didn't concern themselves with environmental niceties or training people in the field. I heard from them since they are trying to change that image but I remain skeptical."

George Kush, vice president of environmental affairs for SCA, said the company admits it didn't handle the Kin-Buc landfill situation well and says it has changed its ways since.

In Illinois, the village of Wilsonville, Macoupin County and the state attorney general have won the first two rounds of a court battle with SCA over a 130-acre landfill located partially within the village. A Macoupin County judge ordered the site shut down after evidence showed that geological conditions at the former coal mine were not suited for liquid waste burial.

SCA lost on its first appeal and the suit is currently awaiting a hearing by the Illinois Supreme Court.

Kush said the trouble in Wilsonville arose after SCA handled "political waste" such as PCBs, which the state and federal EPAs asked it to accept.

● Browning Ferris Industries' $450 million in revenues last year made the Houston-based company the largest waste disposer in the nation. It operates garbage services at 135 locations in 36 states and 17 hazardous waste disposal or treatment plants at 13 locations throughout the nation and overseas. The 10-year-old company grew through acquisition, which BFI spokesman Don Fitch said has caused numerous problems in training new employees and upgrading sites.

A 17-year-old BFI employee died during the recent cleanup operation of the Kernersville hazardous waste disposal site of the Carolawn Co.

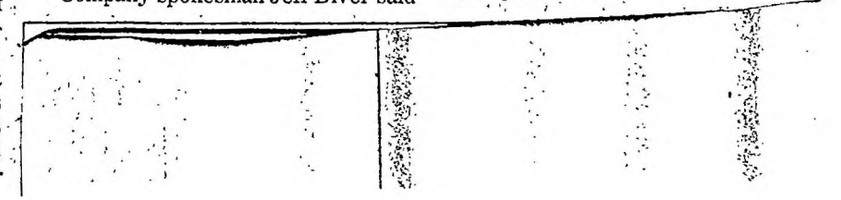
A congressional subcommittee last year conducted extensive hearings into a BFI Nederland, Texas, plant's illegal mixing of nitrobenzene and road oil, which was spread on subdivision roads in East Texas.

Fitch said a subsidiary did that without knowledge of top BFI management, which immediately ordered the roads cleaned and repaved. He said there are more incidents where the company violated environmental laws but the company is trying hard to put its house in order.

● Waste Management Inc., based in Oak Brook, Ill., had $381 million in revenues last year from operations in 31 states, Saudi Arabia and Argentina. Like BFI and SCA, it was formed in the 1960s and provides a range of disposal services for waste, including hazardous waste.

Company spokesman Jeff Diver said the company has maintained a "lo profile" and has had the fewest pro lems with litigation of all the maj companies. "We invest our capital a resources to see to it that we dor have problems," he said. "We all ha had our problems."

● Chem-Security, based in Bell vue, Wash., is a subsidiary of Cher Nuclear Inc., which operates th Barnwell, S.C., disposal site for r dioactive material. Chem-Security o erates a hazardous waste disposal si in Arlington, Ore., which, state off cials there said has never had pro lems. Total revenues were $28 millio last year.



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