



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 4
ATLANTA FEDERAL CENTER
61 FORSYTH STREET
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303-8960

June 30, 2003

Richard Weisler, MD
700 Spring Forest
Suite 125
Raleigh, NC

Dear Dr. ^{Risk} Weisler:

Over the past two years, you have provided me e-mails and phone conversations regarding your concerns over perceived hazardous air sources, their health implications and the need for additional regulations in North Carolina. On this date I am retiring from government service after a total of 42 years with the U.S. Public Health Service and the Environmental Protection Agency. I want to respond to your efforts before I leave.

Most of the federal laws that address various aspects of environmental protection were first passed in the 1970s so our regulatory history in this area is not long. The major laws were developed over time by different committees and interests of the U.S. Congress and, therefore, do not represent a body of law that assures a consistent and comprehensive environmental protection strategy. Citizen activists have been influential since the outset in shaping environmental laws, the implementing regulations and the approach and activities of regulatory agencies. You have taken interest in an environmental issue where there is minimal federal responsibility and authority. As you know, much of the development of specific air pollution control regulations has been delegated to the States and that is the case in the area of your air quality interest.

Your efforts to document unexpected disease clusters and contaminant associations is appreciated. You have avoided an approach of alarmist rhetoric, opting rather to gathering information, data and analysis that support a further evaluation by responsible agencies. I believe that can be an important role, and perhaps the best approach, for citizen activists in obtaining the attention of regulatory agencies and legislative authorities. I understand that you have made your case sufficient to obtain specific scientific study by health agencies. I trust that the data from these studies will provide definitive information for guiding your future efforts in advocating additional control of air contaminants. I urge you to continue the scientific approach for influencing environmental regulations and policy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elmer W. Akin".

Elmer W. Akin, Chief
Office of Technical Services, WD