



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 6

1445 ROSS AVENUE, SUITE 1200
DALLAS, TX 75202-2733

OCT 23 2004

Kingsville, TX 78363

Dear

I am writing to provide you information on the potential health effects of high levels of radionuclide contaminants detected in the drinking water for the community of Garcia Hills, Texas. The drinking water sources for the community are two private drinking water wells, which feed into a ground storage tank.

Water samples taken by Uranium Resources, Inc., since 1996, from the storage tank have shown uranium from five to eight times above EPA's current uranium standard (30 micrograms per liter) for regulated public drinking water systems. Gross alpha radiation was detected at five to eight times above EPA's standard (15 picocuries per liter). Although the EPA does not regulate private drinking water wells, we want to inform the community members of the potential health effects from exposure to uranium in their drinking water, and suggest they seek an alternate source.

I've enclosed copies of a leaflet my staff developed to provide Garcia Hills residents with information on uranium health effects. Please distribute the leaflet to other members of your community. The greatest health risk from consuming high levels of uranium in drinking water is kidney damage. In addition to being weakly radioactive, uranium is a toxic metal that affects kidneys.

The high levels of alpha radiation detected are also a concern. Some people who drink water containing alpha radiation in excess of EPA's standard over many years may have an increased risk of getting cancer. Garcia Hills residents who use the two private wells mentioned above for drinking water need to be aware of this health risk and consult their family doctor.

We recommend that Garcia Hills residents not use these two wells for drinking water. To obtain an alternate source of drinking water, we suggest the community investigate connecting to a local public drinking water system. The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) may be able to help the community assess this as an option. For more information, please contact Margot Taunton (512-239-6403), TCEQ Program Specialist.

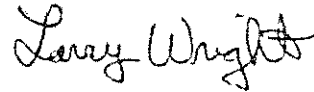


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I hope this information will help inform residents on the health risk from the uranium detected in these two private drinking water wells. If you or residents of Garcia Hills have any questions, please call Jose E. Torres of my staff at (800) 887-6063, ext. 8092. This is a free call.

Sincerely yours,



Larry D. Wright, Chief
Source Water Protection Branch

Enclosures

cc: Margot Taunton
TCEQ