

Maki Iatridis

From: Melanie B. Lewis
Sent: Wednesday, January 11, 2006 9:24 AM
To: Maki Iatridis
Subject: School of Mines - I assume you saw this piece?

I-TEAM: Controversial radioactive waste buried in local landfill

by: [Deborah Sherman](#) I-Team Reporter
posted by: [Dan Werner](#) Web producer

Created: 1/10/2006 4:03 PM MST - Updated: 1/10/2006 5:55 PM MST

The 9NEWS I-Team has learned 455 sacks of contaminated soil from the Colorado School of Mines was buried in the BFI Foothills Landfill located North of Golden on December 16.

Spokeswoman Cindy Parmenter said the CO Department of Public Health & Environment inspected the School of Mines Research Institute site and the landfill area after the material was moved.

In an investigation last year, the I-Team exposed Department Director Doug Benevento had secretly approved the radioactive waste to go in the local landfill, setting a precedent for disposing that kind of waste in Colorado.

An internal state memo obtained by the I-Team dated July 12, 2005, said environmental critics are concerned it could leak into groundwater.

But CO School of Mines' Linn Havelick says the radioactive material will be safe in the landfill.

"Every single load was screened for radioactivity before it left the Research Institute site and every truckload was screened as it entered the landfill facility," said Havelick. "There wasn't a single load that triggered the gate monitors. So, we're confident that the levels of the radioactivity or radionuclides in the material is very low."

It cost CSMRI \$29,000 to dispose of the 1800 cubic yards of contamination. Overall, the CSMRI has spent \$12 million cleaning up the site, according to Havelick.

More excavation at the site is planned for this summer. Havelick says it's not clear how much soil is still contaminated, but he expects it will have the same kind of radioactive levels as the batch just sent to the BFI Landfill.

CO Department of Public Health and Environment Executive Director Doug Benevento resigned last month to take a job with a law firm.