



# U.S. Filter Westates

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY • REGION 9 • SAN FRANCISCO, CA • FEBRUARY 2004

## Risk Assessment at Westates *UPDATED*

Westates is a hazardous waste storage and treatment facility located on the Colorado River Indian Reservation near Parker, Arizona. At Westates, spent carbon is treated in a carbon regeneration furnace. To receive information on other topics regarding Westates, please contact EPA. Contact information is located below.

### WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE RISK ASSESSMENT AT WESTATES?

As part of the permit process, Westates must estimate the risk its operations may pose to human health or the environment. In order to make this estimate, Westates must conduct both a human health risk assessment and an ecologic risk assessment.

The human health risk assessment will estimate long-term (chronic) and short-term (acute) health risks from Westates' operations. The ecologic risk assessment will estimate the risks to plants and animals.

### CONTACT EPA:

If you have questions about Westates please contact:

**Wenona Wilson**  
Community Involvement Coordinator  
Phone: 415-972-3239  
email: [wilson.wenona@epa.gov](mailto:wilson.wenona@epa.gov)

Mail:  
Wenona Wilson (SFD-3)  
U.S. EPA, Region 9  
75 Hawthorne Street  
San Francisco, CA 94105



or call our  
toll free number:  
1-800-231-3075

### HOW WILL EPA USE THE RESULTS OF THE RISK ASSESSMENT?

EPA will use the results of the risk assessment in the hazardous waste permit decision at Westates. EPA will not permit Westates to continue current operations if there is too great a risk to the nearby community or to the environment.

If the risk assessment indicates an unacceptable risk, EPA may give Westates the opportunity to change its operations to reduce the risk to an acceptable level. These changes could include reducing the amount of spent carbon processed per year or adding more equipment to reduce the emissions of pollutants from the stack.

### HOW CAN I COMMENT ON THE RISK ASSESSMENT?

You may comment on the workplan in writing until March 15, 2004, or during a public meeting on February 11, 2004 in Parker, Arizona.

In December 2003, Westates submitted a workplan describing how they propose to conduct their risk assessment. On January 14, 2004 EPA issued a public notice inviting public comment on Westates' proposed Risk Assessment Workplan. EPA placed the public notice in the Parker Pioneer, and sent it to our mailing list. The Risk Assessment Workplan can be found at the Parker Public Library and the CRIT Library in Parker. You may also request a copy from EPA.

Once EPA finishes reviewing the workplan and hears public comments, EPA will request Westates to make any necessary revisions to the workplan. If EPA finds the revised workplan to be acceptable, EPA will approve the workplan.

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## HOW DOES EPA DECIDE WHAT IS AN “ACCEPTABLE RISK” TO MY COMMUNITY?

To decide what is an acceptable risk of cancer in a community from a combustion facility, EPA typically uses the threshold of “one in one hundred thousand”. The “one in one hundred thousand” threshold indicates that for every one hundred thousand residents exposed to facility emissions, at most one additional case of cancer may develop over the course of a 70-year lifetime. This additional case of cancer would be in addition to cancers in the community caused by factors unrelated to the facility, such as smoking, diet, pesticide use, or naturally occurring radon.

When we apply the “one in one hundred thousand” threshold to a community with fewer than one hundred thousand residents (such as Parker with about 3,000 residents), we would expect less than one additional case of cancer to develop in that community due to emissions from the facility.

EPA is interested in your thoughts and comments on what is an acceptable risk to your community from Westates.

## WHAT INFORMATION WILL GO INTO THE RISK ASSESSMENT?

The following information will be used in the risk assessment prepared by Westates:

- \* Results from the upcoming air emissions test, including the amount of pollutants in the stack emissions from Westates.
- \* Information about local and regional weather patterns.
- \* Information about the community around Westates, such as number of residents in various age groups, and susceptible populations.
- \* Information about plants and wildlife around Westates.
- \* Information about community activities, such as home gardening, raising of livestock, and use of plants.

## WHAT INFORMATION DOES EPA HAVE ABOUT RISK FROM WESTATES?

Westates prepared a risk assessment in 1994, using the results of air emissions tests it conducted in 1993 and 1994. This risk assessment estimated an excess cancer risk of one additional case of cancer for every 2 million exposed individuals. This risk estimate is below the threshold of one in one hundred thousand that EPA generally considers acceptable for cancer risk from combustion facilities.

**EPA cannot independently confirm the results of the 1994 risk assessment.** Westates conducted the 1994 risk assessment on its own initiative, and EPA did not review the risk assessment protocol. Nor did EPA fully review the results of the risk assessment. The upcoming risk assessment will help EPA to evaluate the risk that emissions from Westates may pose to the community.

### ***Your comments on the Westates risk assessment are important to us.***

#### ***We would like to hear your comments on:***

*Activities in your community which may be affected by emissions from Westates.*

*Sensitive populations in your community which may be affected by Westates.*

*Unique characteristics of your community which may result in increased exposure to emissions from Westates.*

## **FOR INFORMATION IN ANOTHER LANGUAGE**

If you would like to receive materials about Westates in another language, please contact Wenona Wilson at the toll free phone number and address on the front of this fact sheet.

### **PARA INFORMACION EN ESPAÑOL**

Westates es una empresa de tratamiento y almacenaje de residuos peligrosos y está ubicada cerca de Parker, Arizona. Si usted desea recibir informacion en Español, por favor comuníquese con Wenona Wilson al número de teléfono (800) - llamada gratuita - o a la dirección al reverso de esta página.