

SPENT LEAD-ACID BATTERIES BEING RECLAIMED

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

APR 17 1987

Honorable Joseph M. Gaydos
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Gaydos:

Thank you for your March 17, 1987, letter regarding your constituent's, Mr. George W. Burrows, concerns about the reprocessing of batteries.

First, I want you to know that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) agrees with you that the improper management of spent lead-acid batteries can present a hazard. Thus, as part of its hazardous waste regulation, the Agency regulates the materials when disposed of and when sent for recycling. In particular, we agree that regulation of these recycled materials is necessary to adequately protect human health and the environment. Waste destined for recycling can present the same potential for harm as wastes destined for treatment and disposal; that is, the risks associated with transporting and storing wastes is unlikely to vary depending on whether they are ultimately recycled, treated, or disposed. In the past, facilities recycling hazardous wastes have caused serious health and environmental problems. In fact, recycling operations, including a number of battery reclaimers, account for some of the most serious environmental damage incidents.

Because of this potential hazard, the Agency has developed special standards for spent lead acid batteries that are reclaimed. In particular, the person who reclaims the battery is subject to regulation and the storage activity prior to recycling is regulated. In addition, any spent lead-acid batteries that are disposed of are subject to the general hazardous waste rules. Thus, we believe we have rules in place

that meet our statutory mandate of protecting human health and the environment.

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With respect to your constituent's suggestion regarding imposing a tax on new batteries, EPA does not have the authority to impose such a tax. Therefore, we are not able to consider this approach. I can be of any further assistance, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Original Document signed

J. Winston Porter
Assistant Administrator

Enclosure

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