



**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460**

May 15, 2000

OFFICE OF  
ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION

Brian M. Veith, P.E.  
William F. Cosulich Associates, P.C.  
330 Crossways Park Drive  
Woodbury, NY 11797-2015

Dear Mr. Veith:

This letter responds to your April 6, 2000 letter requesting guidance regarding the reporting requirements of section 313 of the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA). In your letter, you are requesting guidance about nitrate compounds and, in particular, you are asking for confirmation of an interpretation provided to you by Dr. Velu Senthil of the TRI Regulatory Development Branch.

According to your letter, ammonium nitrate is being released from a point source as a result of the reaction of ammonia gas with nitric acid vapor. The ammonia gas and the nitric acid vapor are vented from two separate unit operations which are exhausted through a common stack. The stack discharges the ammonium nitrate and associated air stream to the atmosphere. Your letter further provides that while some water vapor may be present in the point source stream, the vapor is not an appropriate medium to allow the nitrate compound to dissociate into ions. Therefore, you believe that nitrate ions are not discharged from this source. Based on this information and your position that no dissociation is taking place, you state that Dr. Senthil opined that under such circumstances the qualifier for nitrate compounds has not been satisfied and reporting is not required.

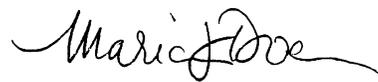
As you are aware, the nitrate compounds category has a qualifier, "water dissociable; reportable only when in aqueous solution." This qualifier "limits the reporting to nitrate compounds that dissociate in water, generating nitrate ion." (See Table 11-2 in the 1998 Toxic Chemical Release Inventory Reporting Forms and Instructions; February 1999, EPA 745-K-99-001). The aqueous solution portion of the qualifier for nitrate compounds means dissolved in water. If there is enough water present to dissolve the ammonium nitrate then the qualifier for the nitrate compounds category has been met and the appropriate threshold determinations, release and other waste management calculations, and supplier notification requirements must be satisfied. All of the ammonium nitrate does not have to dissolve in the water, but the amount

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that does dissolve should be included in threshold and release and other waste management calculations. Succinctly put, if there is insufficient water present in the stack to allow the nitrate compounds to dissociate into ions, then, as Dr. Senthil correctly provided, threshold determinations and release and other waste management calculations for the nitrate compounds would not be required as the qualifier for this compound category would not have been satisfied.

I hope this information is helpful to you in understanding the reporting requirements of section 313 of EPCRA. If you have any other questions, or desire further information, please call Larry Reisman, of my staff, at 202.260.2301.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Maria J. Doa". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Maria J. Doa, Ph.D., Director  
Toxics Release Inventory Program  
Division