SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT IN AKRON, OHIO: 
A FULLY INTEGRATED RESOURCE RECOVERY 
SYSTEM IN OPERATION

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This paper presented very interesting and informative operating results regarding a truly integrated solid waste management system (the "System"). There has been considerable discussion and lip-service paid by many companies, consultants, and communities to developing an integrated waste management system. From this paper, it appears that the City of Akron (the "City") has actually taken the steps and actions necessary to develop what others have only talked about. For anyone familiar with the history of this project, it is not terribly surprising that the City would be in the vanguard of implementing this type of innovative system when one considers that: (a) the City was one of the early pioneers in developing a refuse-derived fuel facility (the "RES") in 1976; and (b) the City has persevered during the last ten years to overcome a large number of significant operating hurdles associated with the RES. I found the authors' paper to be as informative as any I have read regarding actual operating data for this relatively unique type of total system.

I would ask the authors to provide some additional discussion on several matters:

(a) They have stated that, "The economic merit of ash processing and/or ash stabilization and recycling is being studied." Being studied by whom? What, if any, results have been identified regarding residue ash since the date that this paper was written?

(b) Since beginning the demonstration program in April, 1989, how successful has the City been in its curbside collection of commingled recyclable materials, expressed in terms of percent participation by the public and percent of the total waste stream that has been recycled? Has the City managed to develop markets for the recyclable material? Has the quality of the recycled material been a problem in terms of acceptance by the markets, resulting in rejection of loads, because the recycled material is being collected and delivered to the MRF in a commingled mode?

I hope that the authors will present an updated paper on the System in two years and share actual operating data on the operation of the PRF. There is obviously a significant interest in the successful operation of a PRF which can successfully process commingled plastics and develop a product of market value to an end user.

One of the more interesting comments in the paper was in the subsection entitled, "Recycling Through
Energy Recovery.” The authors reported that 80% of the citizens polled answered “yes” to the question, “Is burning newspapers and making steam an acceptable method of recycling for you?” The authors conclude that, “This is an important survey in that it leads one to believe that there is hope for incineration as an alternative for those materials which are not economical or practical to recycle.” Based on my own perception of the current mood and mind set of the general public regarding the incineration of waste of any sort, I would be surprised that a similar 80% favorable vote would be realized in many other communities. Perhaps the response in Akron is somehow reflective of the citizenry’s satisfaction with the City’s efforts to date in the solid waste management area.