

Cinnaminson asks asbestos aid tuesday

JANUARY 9, 1979 PAGE 13

By MARK S. GURALNICK
Of the BCT Staff

WASHINGTON — Representatives of the Cinnaminson School District yesterday urged a special House Subcommittee for national leadership and funding in the asbestos problem nationwide.

In an unprecedented appearance, attorneys, administrators and a school board member from Burlington County's Cinnaminson School District testified at the Oversight Hearing on Asbestos Health Hazards to School Children here.

New Jersey Rep. Edwin B. Forsythe (R-6th District) arranged for the Cinnaminson representatives to participate in the federal hearing. The hearing was called by the Subcommittee on Elementary, Secondary and

Vocational Education of the House Committee on Education and Labor.

A five-page report presented at the hearing by Cinnaminson Superintendent Richard B. Holzman urged the U.S. Congress to improve communications on asbestos between federal and state agencies; to develop technology for eliminating the problem; and to appropriate substantial funds.

Cinnaminson was the only school district in the nation which participated in the House hearings. Panels of medical experts from Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York, representatives of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Environmental Defense Fund, and executives from various asbestos manufacturers such as Johns Manville Corporation also testified.

"We are confronted with contradictory recommendations by various state and federal agencies," Holzman told the panel. "For example, the EPA recommends complete removal of all asbestos material as the only reliable way to alleviate the problem at this time."

"However," he continued, "the district has learned that asbestos material in some of the tunnels to the U.S. Capitol has recently been treated with a sealant at the recommendation of the architect of the Capitol after thorough research."

Cinnaminson School District is one of many school districts nationwide that is plagued by asbestos that was sprayed onto ceilings as a fire retardant and acoustical barrier.

The Memorial and Rush schools

BURLINGTON COUNTY TIMES

and the high school in Cinnaminson have asbestos in their ceilings. State health officials have urged the school board to tear down the ceilings in the three buildings. So far, two Memorial School classrooms have been closed because of the potential danger.

Elsewhere in Burlington County, the Neeta School in Medford Lakes, and four Mount Laurel schools have asbestos considered in pose potential hazards. The Neeta School and the First Baptist Church of Mount Holly are awaiting the results of state tests to determine the intensity of their asbestos contamination.

Exposure to asbestos, particularly for long periods of time, can cause lung cancer among students, teachers, janitors, or churchgoers. Often, the affliction takes as many as 30 years to

manifest itself.

While health experts in the Garden State say removing asbestos ceilings is the best precaution, opponents claim asbestos contamination can be sufficiently remedied by using a sealant on the ceiling at much less expense.

KRC Research Corp. of Moorestown, which provided a sealant for the Capitol tunnel, says it could end local asbestos problems much cheaper.

Some Cinnaminson School Board members are considering the sealant alternative because of the difference in the cost to the taxpayer.

"A vital segment of our community is pushing for immediate action, stressing complete removal," Holzman said at the hearing. "At the same (Continued on Page 4, Col. 1)

Asbestos Exempted

In the June 19, 1978 Federal Register, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued an amendment to its Asbestos Standard which exempts from control all spray-on application of materials in which asbestos fibers are encapsulated with a bituminous or resinous binder during spraying and which are not friable (easily crumbled) after drying. The Asbestos Standard is part of EPA's National Emission Standard for Hazardous Air Pollutants.

This exemption would exclude from control such products as roofing compounds, waterproofing of insulation exposed to the weather, automobile undercoatings and industrial maintenance coatings.

In their proposed amendments issued on March 2, 1977, EPA considered banning the spray-on application of any material containing more than one-percent asbestos. This proposed amendment would have been an expansion of the control of spray-on application asbestos products which originally related only to the prevention of visible emissions from the application

of such coatings. The major purpose of EPA's control of the spray-on application of asbestos-containing materials is to prevent asbestos which crumbles easily and is separated into discrete particles, from becoming an air-borne contaminant and a potential health hazard.

NPCA filed comments on the proposed amendments with EPA on May 2, 1977, stating that certain classes of coatings, i.e. roof coatings, waterproofing compounds, and industrial maintenance systems which may contain asbestos should not be subject to these Standards. Such coatings are not a potential source of friable asbestos because even if spray-applied they do not constitute a major source of asbestos emissions.

The final amendments to the Asbestos Standard issued on June 19th reflect industry's positions and provide the exclusion necessary to continue supplying these essential coatings.

PLAINTIFF'S EXHIBIT

UC-1955