EPA PROPOSES PCB DISCHARGE LIMITATIONS; WESTINGHOUSE ENDS TRANSFORMER USES

Discharge of polychlorinated biphenyls from manufacturing facilities would virtually cease under standards proposed by Environmental Protection Agency July 23. Economic impact of the standards, which regulate manufacture of PCBs and electrical capacitors and transformers, has not yet been calculated, but EPA said that since substitute compounds can be used, no manufacturing facility will be forced to close. In fact, manufacturers have already begun shifting to other fluids, EPA said, noting that non-PCB capacitors and transformers are more expensive.

Earlier, Westinghouse Electric Corp. announced it is phasing out the use of PCBs as an insulating fluid in transformers. No new quotations are being made for units filled with PCB for shipment after Dec. 31, 1976, and customers who have orders placed for delivery after that date are being contacted to determine if existing shipping schedules can be advanced and are being offered alternatives.

EPA's standards, established under Section 307 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, would prohibit the discharge of PCBs from existing or new facilities which manufacture the compound. Monsanto is the only domestic manufacturer of PCBs. For manufacturers of electrical capacitors and transformers, EPA rules would set different standards for existing and new facilities. For existing facilities, no discharge of PCBs would be permitted in process wastewater except water from welding, plating or painting operations and scrubber and quench water from incinerator operations.

Numerical Limits on Other Discharges

All other wastewater discharges, including the exceptions above, must have PCBs in concentrations no greater than 1 microgram per liter as the average per workday over a month and 5 ug/l in samples representing any workday. For new facilities, no discharge of PCBs would be permitted in process wastewater except scrubber and quench water from incinerator operations. All other discharges, including those exceptions, must have PCBs in concentrations no greater than 0.1 ug/l as the average per workday over a month and 0.5 ug/l any single workday.

Announcing the standards, EPA noted that PCBs "have been conclusively demonstrated to produce lethal and sublethal toxic effects at low dose levels upon a wide range of fish, mammals and other wildlife, and have also demonstrated adverse health effects to humans. Moreover, they are highly mobile and persistent in the environment and bioaccumulate greatly in tissue." EPA said control of PCBs in process wastewaters is an important element in the overall effort to eventually eliminate the addition of PCBs to the environment. About 40-million lbs. of PCBs are produced annually in the U.S. and another 400,000 lbs. are imported.

Comments on the proposed regulations should be submitted within 25 days after publication in the *Federal Register* to Hearing Clerk (A-100), Room 1019 WSME, EPA, 401 M St., S.W., Washington, D.C. 20460.

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TRAIN DEDICATES LAND APPLICATION SYSTEM; OTHER WATER POLLUTION RESEARCH NEWS

First major Federally funded wastewater management system involving land application of chlorinated sewage was dedicated July 24 in Muskegon, Mich., by Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Russell E. Train. EPA has provided about 45% of the $44-million needed to build the 27-MGD system which, in 1975, operated at a cost of only 24¢ per 1,000 gallons, including repayment on debt. Total operating cost of $1.9-million was reduced by one-third by selling corn grown on land irrigated by the effluent at a yield of 60 bushels per acre.

Citing a few still unanswered questions, Train said he is convinced that a well designed and managed land application system is as safe as any conventional system, if not safer. Train made the point that land treatment systems "must" be used by grant applicants where they represent the most cost-effective alternative consistent with health and environmental requirements.

In other water pollution research news last week, Dow Chemical reported that algae and brine shrimp are removing suspended solids in a pilot wastewater treatment plant at the Texas Division complex in Freeport. Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution reported that oil development off the northeastern coast is not likely to have a major impact on the commercial fishing industry. General Electric's Consumer Institute reported that nonphosphate detergents do more damage to fabric and washers than was anticipated when they were introduced. And International Joint Commission reported that, while the water quality of the Upper Lakes is still excellent, man's impact is evident, and measures must be taken to preserve and protect all existing uses and prevent degradation.

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