



**A/C Pipe
Producers Association**

PLAINTIFF'S EXHIBIT

CAP-1489

Internal Correspondence

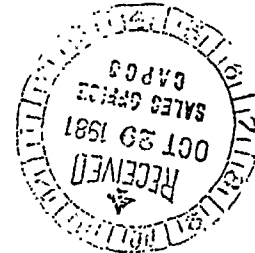
TO: Public Affairs Committee
International Affairs Committee

FROM: *J. F. Welch*
J. F. Welch, Director, Public Affairs

DATE: October 22, 1981

SUBJECT: News Article - Asbestos in Drinking Water

ACTION REQUIRED: Review for information



Enclosed is a news article forwarded by Winner/Wagner & Associates, Inc., AACPP's special counsel in California. It describes the finding of high levels of asbestos in the drinking water in Humboldt County. The article reports the asbestos levels in parts per million so Staff does not know if the reporter or the engineering firm has its facts confused.

Staff Recommendations

1. That the Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District be contacted and provided the latest information on asbestos in drinking water. Staff is not aware whether the District uses A/C pipe, but there is always the liability of spill-over into surrounding municipalities which may use A/C pipe.
2. That Member Companies obtain a copy of the Winzler and Kelly report and forward same to AACPP.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call.

JFW/ajb

Enclosure

cc: A. Kahn, Esq.
N. Rahn, Esq.
B. Garcia (Winner/Wagner) w/o enclosures

copies to: Public Affairs Committee

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High Asbestos In Eureka Water

Officials Not Panicked, Await More Studies And Federal Money

By Pat Murkland
Bee Correspondent

EUREKA — Water used for drinking by more than 70,000 Humboldt County residents contains one of the highest concentrations of asbestos fibers found in water supplies across the United States, according to an engineering firm study made public Thursday.

The asbestos, a fiber suspected to cause cancer, enters water through eroding serpentine rock along the Mad River, according to the study by the Eureka engineering firm of Winzler & Kelly.

The river is the main source of water for municipalities served by the Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District. The district requested the engineering study last year after a University of California researcher found a correlation between gastrointestinal types of cancer and asbestos in San Francisco Bay area drinking water.

Levels of asbestos eroding naturally into Humboldt water reservoirs far exceed levels of asbestos found in the Bay area supplies and in drinking water across the country studied by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in 1978, the engineering firm concluded.

The average rate of asbestos in the Humboldt Bay district was 70 parts per million, while the Bay area averaged 25 parts per million, according to the engineering firm.

Asbestos levels vary during the sea-

sons but show marked increase during winter months, the study said.

The firm recommended that county health officials ask the California Department of Health Services to include Humboldt County in current state and federally funded research of Bay area drinking water.

But the district board of directors voted Thursday to hold back on any decision until more is known about the health effects of asbestos.

"Our board financially is not in the position to be a trailblazer in this," said board chairman Herbert Urban.

"It takes millions and millions (of dollars) to first ascertain what the problems are and to design filtering plants to take care of them and this is being done all through the country. We would prefer to wait for the federal government or the state government or other larger agencies to do something on this."

The federal Environmental Protection Agency has established water quality criteria for toxic pollutants. But federal standards for asbestos apply to waste discharges and not to drinking water standards.

Urban said that federal and state information will probably become available within the next two years.

"Possibly they'll mandate that we bring it down to certain levels and if they do, then possibly we'll receive financial support on the mandate," Urban said.

"We know that our native Americans

have been drinking it since time immemorial. We know that the city of Eureka has used Mad River water since the 1930s, and we're not prone to feel it's a panic problem."

But the engineering report said it is difficult to assess health risks from asbestos because in many instances, long periods of time elapse before trouble is detected.

"Nobody has defined asbestos fibers in water as truly being a health problem," engineer John Winzler said.

Winzler said sophisticated filtration systems probably are the only way to solve the problem.

"But again, nobody has mandated that this be done yet," he said. "Neither the state or the EPA has enough knowledge that there is a health problem or that you should do anything about it."

The EPA recommends, however, that for maximum protection, people should avoid exposure to asbestos-contaminated water. The EPA estimates concentrations of asbestos results in additional lifetime cancer risks for one person in 100,000.

When the engineering firm compared EPA's criteria with concentrations of asbestos fibers in the Humboldt water supply, it estimated there is a lifetime cancer risk for approximately one person in 500. The firm added, however, that a statistical review of health records was needed to support its estimate.