

On Tuesday and Wednesday of this week, I met with officials from the Departments of Human Resources, Natural Resources and Community Development and Transportation to review the actions that have been taken to deal with the PCB spills and to determine whether further action is needed.

As a result of those meetings, I have issued the following instructions:

--The Department of Transportation will immediately move ahead to cover the affected areas with charcoal to deactivate the PCBs and prevent any contamination.

--After that, grass and soil along all the affected areas will be scooped up and removed to sites that are being identified and prepared by the Department of Human Resources.

--County health departments will be asked to provide information about PCBs to every person living along the affected roadways.

--The Department of Transportation will erect signs cautioning people to stay off the affected grass and soil.

In addition:

--I am doubling the reward offered for information leading to the arrest and conviction of those responsible for the spills, to \$5,000.

--I am directing Secretary of Crime Control and Public Safety Phil Carlton to put extra Highway Patrolmen on the roads at night to protect against further spills.

--I am joining Attorney General Rufus Edmisten in asking the General Assembly to increase the penalty for such spills to a felony.

I also want to report to you that, while I was in Washington yesterday to testify before a Senate subcommittee, I met with the director of the Environmental Protection Agency and White House officials to ask their cooperation and assistance in dealing with this matter.

Both promised their full cooperation, and I could not be more pleased with the spirit of helpfulness that they displayed.

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Douglas Costle, the EPA director, agreed to make available to us the Health Effects Research Lab in the Research Triangle. He agreed to go to North Carolina an EPA official with the authority to approve our removal plans and expedite that process. At our request, the EPA is today taking aerial photographs of the affected areas, using infrared cameras to look for discolored soil and foliage damage.

I have asked President Carter to make the affected areas eligible for federal disaster assistance money. Frankly, this is a long-shot request, but I was assured at the White House that every effort would be made to provide assistance.

I cannot give you an exact timetable for removing the affected soil and grass. The Department of Transportation will have a trial run today of the charcoal process. Once that is done and enough charcoal is obtained, it will take no more than two weeks to cover all the affected areas with two layers of charcoal, topped by a layer of emulsified asphalt. The grass and soil will be removed after that.

The cost of laying down the charcoal, preparing sites and removing the material may be as much as \$2.5 million.

I want to emphasize one point. Our state health officials have conferred with experts across the country -- including the National Institute of Health, the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta and the National Institute of Occupational Health and Safety -- and determined that the PCBs present no immediate health danger.

Other chemicals in the PCB spills have caused nausea and dizziness in some people. People should avoid walking in the spills or otherwise coming into contact with it. If they are exposed, they should wash with soap and water. If they feel they have had excessive exposures, they should contact their county health department.

We do not, of course, know the long-term effects of PCBs on humans. That is why we must remove this material to protected, isolated sites.