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Govt. sues laboratory for overdue data

PROVIDENCE — The U.S. Attorney's office filed suit yesterday against Tivian Laboratories Inc., 330 Silver Spring St., Providence, for ignoring government requests for data on highly toxic PCBs — polychlorinated biphenyls.

Refusal to provide the information is a violation of the federal Water Pollution Control and Clean Air Acts, the suit states.

A civil penalty of $10,000 a day for every day of violation is requested. It is alleged that the violation began Nov. 7 and has continued every day since, representing a possible fine of $1.8 million so far.

The suit also asks that Tivian be ordered to supply the information requested last October by the Environmental Protection Agency. EPA sought data on Tivian's use and handling of PCBs, polychlorinated terphenyls and other similar compounds and mixtures.

Health problems associated with PCBs include eye discharge, acne, ulcers of the uterus, abnormal skin pigmentation and reproductive failures.

Tivian was the only one of 84 firms in the nation that ignored letters and follow-up phone calls by EPA's Washington and Boston offices, an EPA spokesman has said. The firms' names were taken from customer lists of the Monsanto Chemical Co., the nation's largest PCB manufacturer, and from government data on hazardous materials, EPA has said.

Tivian president Marvin S. Antelman of Newton, Mass., has denied using PCB and has accused federal officials of "harassing and bugging" him for his past criticism of government agencies and foreign policies.

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