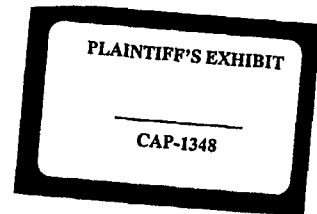




A/C Pipe
Producers Association
Executive Committee
International Affairs Committee

H. J. W.
H. B.
H. P.



Internal Correspondence

TO *J. F. Welch*
FROM J. F. Welch, Vice President

JFW
6-21-82

DATE June 18, 1982

SUBJECT State of Connecticut - News Article on A/C Pipe Ban

REF: JFW correspondence, State of Connecticut - Petition for Declaratory Ruling on the Safety of A/C Pipe, May 21, 1982.

ACTION REQUIRED: Review for information

Enclosed is a news article from The Telegraph (Nashua, New Hampshire), of Friday, May 28, 1982, recently brought to Staff's attention by Wyatt McCallie (Manville Corporation). Since the article carries an Associated Press (AP) byline from Hartford, Connecticut, Staff concludes it resulted from the May 13 and 17, 1982 conversations described in the above reference.

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

JFW/ajb

Enclosure

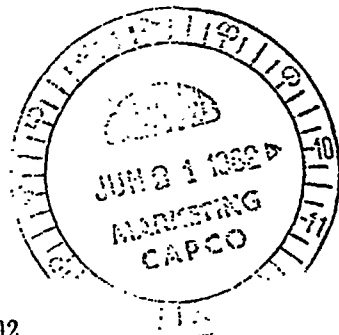
cc: A. Kahn, Esq.
Brandon Hickey, Esq.

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Chrono

Asbestos cement pipes trigger controversy

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) — Every few weeks, Sharon Lynch drives to a natural spring in Bristol to stock up on water. Fearing that microscopic asbestos fibers threaten her family with cancer, she won't use tap water for drinking or cooking.

"I have to go on a kind of gut reaction to the whole thing and say I just don't want to drink water that might have asbestos in it," said Mrs. Lynch. "I would just prefer not to have any in my kids."

She is chairwoman of Citizens for Clean Water, a group of Farmington residents whose water supply system uses asbestos-reinforced concrete pipe, commonly called asbestos cement pipe.

Since 1978, she has been negotiating with the water company in Farmington's Unionville section over the asbestos issue, which arose when federal testing showed high levels of the substance in the water supply. Asbestos levels are down, but Mrs. Lynch's group still wants the pipe replaced.

Only a few of the approximately 300 families on the water system have avoided drinking the tap water since then, she said. But Mrs. Lynch periodically makes the round trip of about 15 miles to the spring to get water for herself, her husband and their two children.

Connecticut authorities are about to implement a much-disputed regulation requiring water utilities to monitor the pipes for signs of contamination that might pose a cancer risk.

But the pipe industry and some medical experts question the need for monitoring and criticize the state's 20-month-old legislative ban against installing any more of the controversial pipe. Pipe manufacturers are pressing a court challenge to the ban, saying the pipe is safe.

Connecticut is the only state to ban the lightweight pipe, which uses asbestos as reinforcement and has become popular because it is easier to install than much heavier iron pipe. About 900 miles of the controversial pipe are buried in the ground in about 80 of Connecticut's 169 communities, according to state officials. An estimated 575,000 of the state's 3.2 million residents get their water from supply systems using asbestos cement pipe.

The ban was imposed after federal officials in 1978 and 1979 found high levels of asbestos fibers in the water systems of six Connecticut towns — Farmington's Unionville section, Simsbury, Newtown, Middlebury, Stratford and Sprague — and detected some asbestos in 17 other water systems.

No one knows if any Connecticut water supplies still have high asbestos levels because the complicated federal Environmental Protection Agency monitoring program was not intended to be permanent. It was designed to find out if a problem existed with asbestos cement pipe dissolving and has

led to current research into ways to prevent corrosive water from eating away at the pipe.

"We haven't done any additional research recently," said Ray Jaremy, chief of the water supply division at the state Health Services Department.

"The testing is very expensive and very time consuming. We really don't have the ability to do it," he said.

The state monitoring regulation, if it becomes final, is expected to increase customers' bills as water companies seek to recover their testing costs.

Water companies would not be required to conduct the type of testing the EPA performed four years ago to discover tiny asbestos particles. They would have to check water before and after it flowed through the pipes for indications that concrete containing asbestos was dissolving.

"This is reasonably inexpensive monitoring," said Daniel Millstone, a lawyer with the Connecticut Fund for the Environment, a vigorous backer of the ban and the proposed monitoring program.

The results of scientific research on the potential effect on human health of asbestos fibers in drinking water are far from conclusive.

"I think it's insignificant ... I don't believe that's a realistic risk, in light of all the other risks that we have to contemplate," said Dr. J. Walter Meigs, a cancer expert at Yale University's Epidemiology and Public Health Department in New Haven.

"We're being bombarded with carcinogens (cancer-causing agents) daily, and the body has its own defenses. It's not practical to ban all substances," Meigs said.

While breathing asbestos fibers is widely believed by scientists to be a cause of cancer, research on the effects of the fibers in the digestive system is inconclusive.

Meigs points to a study in the Seattle area that found no difference in cancer rates between places with high asbestos levels in drinking water and those with no asbestos in the water.

However, Marty S. Kanarek, a University of Wisconsin professor, defends a three-year study he conducted in the San Francisco area, which reached an opposite conclusion. Meigs criticized the way the San Francisco study was conducted and said animal research supports the claim that ingesting tiny amounts of asbestos is not dangerous.

Kanarek concluded that, after ruling out other possibilities, residents of communities with high asbestos levels in drinking water had higher rates of cancer than nearby places without the asbestos problem.

He believes more research is needed, but supports Connecticut's cautious approach to the issue.

"There is just this one study," Kanarek said in a telephone interview. "At this point, we're just not sure. Connecticut is just being prudent."

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The Telegraph, Friday, May 22, 1982



Not From the Tap

Sharon Lynch, one of the leaders of a Farmington, Conn. group protesting quality of water transmitted through asbestos cement pipes, pours a drink for her son Christopher, 11, as daughter Chandra, 7, watches. Mrs. Lynch travels 15 miles every few weeks to get "pure" water from a spring in Bristol, Conn.

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