

He urged that "immediate steps should be taken to lower the current standard."

Testing

NTP BIOASSAY DATA HAVE DISCREPANCIES; CPSC ASKS FOR RAW DATA ON METHYLENE CHLORIDE

The National Toxicology Program recently announced that data discrepancies have been observed in several bioassays being conducted by a contract laboratory, with the result that the staff of the Consumer Product Safety Commission has asked for raw data on one chemical it is currently investigating.

According to a memorandum from the CPSC chemical hazards program staff, released Sept. 7, one of the bioassays containing the discrepancies is the completed gavage bioassay on methylene chloride. As a result of analysis of raw data conducted by the Halogenated Solvent Industry Alliance, NTP determined it will not issue a final report on the gavage bioassay. Studies of tetrachloroethylene (perchloroethylene) also were found to be seriously flawed and major or total data segments may not be promulgated into a technical report, the memorandum said.

The CPSC priority project on chlorocarbons involves methylene chloride and perchloroethylene. During fiscal 1984 the staff planned to review the results of the bioassays, but was awaiting the inhalation bioassay before recommending action on consumer product use. The NTP bioassay was the second gavage bioassay on methylene chloride, the staff said (Current Report, Sept. 24, 1982, p. 755). An inhalation bioassay by Dow Chemical Company was reviewed by the staff in 1981 (July 31, 1981, p. 402).

The CPSC health sciences staff said it will request that it be given access to the raw data of the bioassays to determine whether any value can be gained from the data.

Hazardous Materials

MTB PUBLISHES 21 EXEMPTION APPLICATIONS, 30 REQUESTS TO BECOME PARTY TO EXEMPTIONS

Industry requests for exemptions from hazardous materials transportation regulations and applications for exemption renewal or to become party to an exemption were published Sept. 12 by the Materials Transportation Bureau (48 FR 40969).

The list included 21 applications for exemption, 56 applications for renewal, and 30 applications to become party to an exemption.

Comments on the applications may be submitted to the MTB Dockets Branch, Department of Transportation, Washington, D.C. 20590.

The deadline is Oct. 12 for comments on the new applications and Sept. 27 for comments on the renewals and applications to become a party.

Carcinogens

CALIFORNIA OFFICIALS PROBE CONVERSION OF TRICHLOROETHYLENE INTO VINYL CHLORIDE

SAN FRANCISCO — (By a BNA Staff Correspondent) — California state health and water quality officials are studying the possibility that trichloroethylene (TCE) may be transformed in the environment into vinyl chloride, a potent human carcinogen.

Vinyl chloride was found in certain wells on the property of Aerojet General Corp., outside of Sacramento, according to state officials, even though Aerojet claimed it did not dispose of any vinyl chloride that could be a direct source of such contamination.

The suspected link between TCE and vinyl chloride was identified by the Department of Health Services and the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board. The two agencies enforce state toxic waste and water quality laws and are cooperating in the cleanup of contaminated sites.

TCE and vinyl chloride are similar compounds chemically, differing only in the number of chlorine atoms. Preliminary research indicated that TCE may transform into vinyl chloride in the presence of organic matter and microorganisms in the absence of oxygen.

TCE is a suspected human carcinogen, increasingly found as a groundwater contaminant. Vinyl chloride is a highly volatile compound and a known human carcinogen linked in chemical workers with angiosarcoma, a degenerative liver cancer.

The state agencies noted that vinyl chloride is present in some wells on the Aerojet property despite company assertions that it did not dispose of the compound. However, state officials said Aerojet did handle and dispose of large quantities of TCE in locations where vinyl chloride has been detected, leading to the theory that TCE may be transformed into vinyl chloride.

State officials expressed concern that the presence of vinyl chloride in groundwater may complicate clean-up efforts at affected sites. They promised to provide adequate monitoring and other controls wherever vinyl chloride may be present.

General Policy

LAVELLE TO BE TRIED ON PERJURY CHARGES FOR TESTIMONY ON CONDUCT OF CLEAN-UP PROGRAM

Rita M. Lavelle will stand trial Nov. 16 on charges that she lied to Congress and to the government about her management of the Environmental Protection Agency's toxic waste cleanup program.

At a Sept. 12 hearing, Judge Norma Holloway Johnson of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia set the trial date and took under advisement a defense motion to dismiss the charges against the former EPA assistant administrator.

Lavelle's attorney, James Bierbower, urged that the charges be dismissed, alleging that EPA attorneys personally advised Lavelle on preparation of a written statement submitted to Congress involving the hazardous waste cleanup program and then assisted government prosecutors in preparing the case against Lavelle for indictment. This was a violation of the attorney-client privilege, Bierbower argued.

Johnson took the motion under advisement after requesting a "more specific" sworn statement by Lavelle that she sought legal advice from EPA attorneys and that they provided her with it, according to Justice Department spokesman John Russell.

Lavelle pleaded innocent to an Aug. 4 federal grand jury indictment for perjury, endeavoring to obstruct a congressional proceeding, and making false statements in a government matter (Current Report, Aug. 5, p. 664). If convicted on the charges, she faces a maximum penalty of 25 years in prison and a \$21,000 fine.