

SPI

THE SOCIETY OF THE PLASTICS INDUSTRY, INC.

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SOCIETY OF PLASTICS INDUSTRY WITNESSES
LEAD SECOND DAY OF HEARINGS ON
PROPOSED OSHA STANDARD FOR VINYL CHLORIDE

Washington, D.C. --- The Society of the Plastics Industry (SPI) was the first major witness in the second day of Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) hearings on a proposed new standard for occupational exposure to vinyl chloride, an industrial chemical recently linked with angiosarcoma of the liver among previously heavily exposed employees (details of the SPI presentation were provided in a release yesterday. Highlights of the cross examination of SPI witnesses, and the testimony of subsequent witnesses at this afternoon's hearing will be reported tomorrow.)

On Tuesday, June 25--the first day of hearings,--leadoff witness Daniel Boyd, director of the OSHA Office of Standards Development, reviewed the "no detectable level" standard proposed by OSHA in May; stressed that the government believes

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it to be "proper and necessary" to weigh economic and technical feasibility in the development of a final standard; and stated that OSHA recognized that control problems within various segments of the industry differed widely.

The second witness, Dr. Herman Kraybill of the National Cancer Institute, reported on recent animal studies on vinyl chloride inhalation and concluded that VCM "fulfills the requirements for a proven carcinogen." He alleged that the present temporary occupational health standard of 50 ppm has a "high probability of causing cancer in man."

Dr. Marvin Schneiderman, also of the National Cancer Institute, presented testimony on the techniques--and difficulties--of extrapolating from animal to human data. Based on a mathematical evaluation of the animal research of Dr. Cesare Maltoni, Dr. Schneiderman concluded that the probability to man of contracting angiosarcoma at 50 ppm (parts per million) would be greater than one in 100.

Dr. Edwin Hyatt, a consultant to OSHA, reviewed the OSHA recommendations for respiratory protection equipment. He admitted under questioning that it would take two years for manufacturers to provide enough self contained breathing apparatus to supply the entire vinyl chloride industry, and that the wearing of such a device for extensive periods of time was "at best an instrument of torture."

Dr. Marcus Key of the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) reported on research activities undertaken by his agency since the beginning of the year, including limited investigations of VCM levels in PVC fabricating plants.

Peter Bommarito, president of the United Rubber Workers, and Chairman of the Industrial Union Department of the AFL-CIO, stated that the United States got along without vinyl chloride for 200 years and that it could get along without it again if the proposed OSHA standard forces the closing of the industry.

Louis S. Beliczky, also of the United Rubber Workers, suggested numerous minor changes in the proposed standard, including the setting of a 0.01 per cent limit on residual VCM in PVC resin. Beliczky admitted that he had no epidemiological or technical feasibility data to support his position, but reaffirmed his belief that the industry "would have no difficulty" in achieving the proposed standard.

Representatives of the New England Plastics Corporation and the PVC Belting Manufacturers Committee opposed the "no detectable limit" standard on the basis that it would force the closing of the PVC resin industry and would, as a result, eliminate their source of supply and put them out of business.

Dr. Irving J. Selikoff of the Mount Sinai Environmental Science Laboratory reported on various investigations undertaken by the Laboratory within the past few months into the health effects of vinyl chloride. Dr. Selikoff and Dr. William Nicholson, also of the Mount Sinai Staff, emphatically supported the proposed standard. Under questioning, however, Dr. Selikoff stated that, if he were convinced the industry was making every effort possible to reduce employee exposure as fast as possible to as low a level as was achievable, he would be "as patient as Job" in requiring the "no detectable level."

(Note: Yesterday's summary release reported on page 2 a ceiling of 10 ppm and a maximum time weighted average of 5 ppm to be effective for VCM producing plants on October 5, 1977. This date should read October 5, 1975.)