

Speedy extradition sought in PCB case

From Staff and Wire Reports

An extradition request for three New York men accused of deliberately dumping oil containing PCBs along North Carolina highways is expected to land on the desk of New York Gov. Hugh L. Carey today.

The request, asking for the return of Robert J. Burns, 49, and his two sons, Randall Burns, 20, and Timothy Burns, 23, was mailed special delivery Wednesday by Gov. James B. Hunt Jr.

Hunt's legal counsel, Jack L. Cosori, also contacted Carey's office by telephone Wednesday to ask for quick action in the case, said Gary Pearce, Hunt's press secretary.

"He called to tell them that the papers are on the way and that we're real concerned, so how about expediting it if they

can," Pearce said.

The extradition process usually takes about two weeks, but that could be shortened if New York authorities comply with the request for quick action, Pearce said.

It also is possible that the three men may waive their right to an extradition hearing. The men could fight the extradition with court action.

"They have not said they will resist, so that is still a possibility at this point," Pearce said.

On Wednesday, the men remained in Chautauque County Jail in New York under \$5,000 bond and had not waived their extradition rights, according to authorities there.

Also Wednesday, U.S. Middle District Attorney H.M. "Mickey" Michaux of

Greensboro said he may meet next week with officials of the Environmental Protection Agency to discuss possible charges against the three men in his district.

Michaux said his office has not been involved in the case because most of the spills occurred in counties in North Carolina's Eastern Judicial District.

The three men were indicted last week on felony and misdemeanor charges of dumping of the industrial chemical along highways in Halifax County. The chemical is believed to cause liver cancer in laboratory animals and numerous chronic ailments in humans.

Federal officials have also charged the three men with eight counts of improperly disposing of PCBs in 10 North Carolina

counties. If convicted, the men face fines of up to \$25,000 and one year in jail on each charge.

As long as the men remain in state custody in New York or North Carolina, however, federal warrants cannot be served. The warrants can be served if the men are released on bond. Federal prosecutors have filed detainers requiring that the suspects be held if they post bond so that the federal warrants can be served.

A total of 210 miles of highways in 15 counties have been contaminated by the dumping of PCBs, polychlorinated biphenyls. The chemical is used in electrical transformers and other electrical equipment.

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