Metro-East Journal
89th Year No. 111 May 11, 1977
First of Sections Pages

Findley claims 'likelihood' of PCB leak

U. S. Rep. Paul Findley, R-*Pittsfield*, claims there is "a strong likelihood" that hazardous materials buried in a landfill at Wilsonville could leach into the area's water supply.

A landfill official today denied the likelihood, and said *experts support his judgment.*

Findley said he based his conclusion on a report made to him by Thomas O. Glover, a U.S. Bureau of Mines official.

Findley described the report as "disquieting," and warned, "The evidence appears less than reassuring that the Wilsonville site is completely safe in years to come.

"There is a strong likelihood that within 30 years chemical substances stored at the Earthline site could escape through subsidence cracks, which is exactly what the residents fear," Findley said.

"It remains open to serious debate as to whether or not the cushioning effects of the clay soil could withstand cracking and retain their impermeability," he concluded.

The report from Glover showed that the landfill is above the abandoned Superior Coal Co. Mine Number 4, and that "extensive (mine) subsidence" could be expected by 1985.

Findley reported the subsidence could cause surface cracking that "could allow surface waters to get into the buried drum storage area and, similarly, water could leach out into the water table through such cracks."

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, which issued Earthline a special permit to operate the landfill for hazardous materials, maintains that a thick layer of clay underlying the landfill can contain the materials for an average of 600 years.

Findley's report concedes surface cracks "*will silt in* in a relatively short time, but they do allow surface waters to enter the waste storage area."

Findley projects subsidence up to two feet, and acknowledges the Earthline Corp.'s claim "that in its engineering it allowed for a 42 inch or 3½ foot subsidence probability."

Findley maintains, however, that until it can be determined if the clay subsoil can retain impermeability after subsidence, "the wisdom of using the site for storage of toxic wastes appears questionable."

Ken Hartberger, regional manager for Earthline, today said, "We take strong exception to those remarks."

He said estate geological and EPA experts agree that the landfill will have "absolutely no adverse effect" on the area's ground water supply.

Hartberger said the landfill is atop "70 feet of clay materials which are elastic . . . like chewing gum." He explained that should subsidence occur "the ground would stretch," not crack.

Hartberger said the mine is 300 feet below the *landfill.* He said the landfill is "designed for the maximum amount of subsidence."

MONS 001624