GOVERNORS TELL EPA TO SPEED UP REVIEW OF TOXIC AIR POLLUTANTS

A faster and simpler method is needed for the Environmental Protection Agency to recommend list toxic air pollutants, the National Governors Association concluded at its annual meeting held July 29-31 in Nashville, Tenn.

Charging EPA with being too slow in making listing decisions, the governors asked the agency to speed up its review of toxic air pollutants and expeditiously list them under Section 112 of the Clean Air Act. To help states control toxic air pollutants, NGA recommended that EPA publish control guidelines "within two years of listing a pollutant," and implement a national air toxics clearinghouse on hazardous pollutants.

States should be authorized to develop more stringent toxic air controls than the federal government, NGA concluded. The group also recommended that more stringent controls be established for newly identified toxic air pollutants than for already known pollutants. In addition, NGA wants EPA to provide technical guidance to states to help them protect against newly identified sources of toxic air pollutants.

As for groundwater, the governors concluded that states can most effectively establish groundwater protection programs because they are best able to evaluate factors affecting their jurisdictions. Likewise, NGA said that states are best able to regulate leaking underground storage tanks and should be given additional federal funding for regulation. The group also recommended that Superfund be amended to include a cleanup program for leaking tanks.

TOXIC MATERIALS NEWS IN BRIEF

• Options for cleaning up "hot spots" of polychlorinated biphenyls contaminating the New Bedford Harbor in Massachusetts have been announced by the Environmental Protection Agency. Ranging in cost from $25 million to $80 million, the options include capping the contaminated sediments, dredging the sediments and disposing them in an unlined containment site, disposing the dredged sediments in a lined containment site or disposing the dredged sediments in an upland containment site.

• U.S. EPA has authorized $960,000 from Superfund to cap the Iron Horse Park asbestos site in Billerica, Mass. Over the next four months, EPA actions at the site will include construction of a 30-inch gravel, stone and topsoil cap; evaluation of the existing site cover; periodic ambient air monitoring; and indoor sampling of selected residences adjacent to the site.

• In a July 18 story on coated bowling pins, TMN described Surlyn as a highly flammable material that emits nerve gas if ignited. A spokesman for DuPont, manufacturer of Surlyn, told TMN that the substance is no more flammable than wood and does not generate phosgene when burned. According to DuPont, "Chemically, phosgene is COCl2. Surlyn, which is composed of carbon, hydrogen, oxygen and the metal ion, does not contain chlorine. It is impossible to form a chlorinated material by combusting a product that doesn't contain chlorine."

• The risk of cancer from children's products containing di-2-ethylhexyl phthalate is "below the range considered to be worthy of regulatory action by the federal government," says a study commissioned by the Chemical Manufacturers Association. Conducted by Dr. Joseph Rodericks, the study concludes that, since rats and mice metabolize DEHP differently from humans, the liver tumors formed in rats and mice fed high doses of DEHP may not occur in humans. The study is available from CMA, 2501 M St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037, (202) 887-1224.

MASS. DPH UNDERTAKES $980,000 STUDY OF PCB CONTAMINATION

In an effort to determine the short- and long-term health effects of human exposure to polychlorinated biphenyls, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health is undertaking a three-year, $980,000 study of the effects of PCB contamination in an urban environment.

Funded by the Environmental Protection Agency, the DPH study is the first community-wide study of the effects of PCB contamination in an urban environment, according to Dayton Miller, project officer with the Centers for Disease Control. DPH Commissioner Bailus Walker said that the study will focus on the long-term effects of PCB, about which "little is known." CDC estimates that 99% of all Americans have some level of PCB in their blood.

In the first phase of the study, Massachusetts officials will survey 1,800 residents of New Bedford, Fairhaven, Dartmouth and Acushnet. These communities surround the Acushnet River and New Bedford Harbor, both of which contain high levels of PCBs. Data collected in phase I will be used to determine the extent of PCB contamination in residents as well as their exposure to other chemical contaminants and heavy metals.

The second phase of the study will begin in the spring of 1986 with the selection of two study groups. One group will have PCB blood levels greater than 30 parts per billion, and the second group will have PCB blood levels less than 10 ppb. Participants will be matched for age, sex and ethnic background. The study will focus specifically on the effects of PCB on the liver, metabolic and immune systems, and neurological functions. A separate study will target the effects of PCB on children.

TOXIC SUBSTANCES CONTROL ACT requirements are outlined in a new compliance and enforcement manual published by Government Institutes Inc. Originally prepared by the Environmental Protection Agency, the 498-page manual outlines TSCA monitoring procedures, compliance inspection procedures, enforcement actions and penalty procedures. Copies are available for $48 from GII, 966 Hungerford Dr., #24, Rockville, Md. 20850, (301) 251-9250. BMD

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