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EPA bureaucrats decide It's time to go after Dow'

Letters: Dow/EPA

To the editor:

When a federal government agency makes irresponsible statements and wild accusations, such as EPA has been doing here in midland; one has to suspect that the motives bear no relation to the actions and that the agency is exploiting the situation for their own selfish purposes.

And when that agency has a history of such irresponsible accusations, that history should be reviewed by all concerned. Here is some background information which indicates that EPA's motives are less than pure.

In the mid 1970s, employees at EPA charged with overseeing the chemical industry were desperate to pass legislation that would give them greater control over chemical waste disposal. Congress had refused to pass legislation for four straight years and many federal jobs were in jeopardy.

So a decision was made to engineer an attack on an industrial chemical from the chlorobenzene family, polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) and to create a public clamor for its removal from commerce, as a means to pass a toxic waste control act.

PCB was an excellent candidate despite the fact that no human had ever been seriously harmed by it during the 30 plus years it was in use. It was persistent in the environment. It did bioaccumulate in fish and fowl. And it had only one industrial market, for which a substitute material was available.

Its users, the electrical apparatus manufacturing industry, had been careless in controlling discharges and rivers such as the Hudson had been needlessly polluted. There had been a gross contamination of edible oils in Japan which had caused some sickness. And there was only one manufacturer in the United States to contend with: Monsanto Chemical Co. in St. Louis, Mo.

So after some preliminary sparring similiar to the sparring currently occurring in Midland, EPA called a world-wide PCB symposium in Chicago and newsmen and researchers were flown in from around the world to testify on this dreadful chemical which was billed by EPA as "the most toxic chemical known to man" (sound familiar?)

For two days, EPA paraded researchers from all over the world before the news media to expound on their research and to condemn the chemical.

When the symposium was over, no one had offered a single shred of evidence that any human being had ever died or become deathly ill as a result of PCB contamination — not even in Japan where over 100 families had ingested gross amounts over an extended period of time.

But the smear campaign worked. A hungry news media, led by an ardent fisherman from Sports Illustrated magazine who decided PCB was ruining the trout fishing, filled the news with dire predictions resulting in enough public outcry to push a toxic substances control act though Congress. And then....EPA turned around and announced the PCB was "too dangerous to remove from industry" which was the exact opposite position to the position they had taken prior to the passage of their legislation.

Knowing this background, one can quickly understand what is presently happening in Midland. Under the Reagan Administration, EPA employees have been told to work cooperatively with the chemical industry rather than continue their adversarial relationship.

But this decision has not set well with the more belligerent EPA employees and a "palace revolt" has occured.

Dow Chemical quickly becomes the focal point of the EPA's attack. They are one of the largest manufacturers of chlorobenzene-based products. They do have one of the most advanced waste control facilities in the chemical industry. They were in the front ranks of the opposition during the fight to pass the toxic substances control act legislation. They are located on a tiny river that empties into the Great Lakes. And they have been successfully resisting EPS's efforts to obtain their proprietary production technology. In short, "it's time to get even with Dow."

So the heat is on and EPA is now going to sacrifice Dow's Midland Division through the manipulation of the press and well-meaning but poorly informed environmentalists. They will use the minute residues coming from one of the world's most advanced waste control plants in parts per quadrillion (1,000,000,000,000,000) to incite the public and cause enough public outcry to egg Congress into increasing their budget which will allow Valdas Adamkus and his cohorts to increase their staffs and obtain larger salaries for themselves.

Which only leaves one question to be answered: "When is the dioxin symposium scheduled for, Valdas?"

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