48-4 MARINE DIGEST
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EVERETT DOESN'T WANT A TOXIC CHEMICAL

EVERETT — It's a toxic chemical which can cause deformities or death in marine organisms and humans.

About 275 gallons of it was spilled 14 months ago in Seattle's Duwamish River, and now the Army Corps of Engineers may want to move about 200 gallons of the chemical to the Everett waterfront.

Local port, city and county officials were briefed on the possibility Nov. 13, although no firm request was made. The initial reaction of the local officials was negative.

The chemical in question is a polychlorinated biphenyl, commonly called PCB. It was being used as a transformer collant when it spilled.

The exact proposal is to shift some 40,000 cubic yards of contaminated dredge spoils from the Duwamish spill site to the new Norton Avenue Boat Launch which will soon be under construction.

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EVERETT

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Everett Mayor Robert Anderson was outspoken in his criticism of the plan.

"It's a real chilling prospect for the future," he said. "It's tough to find ourselves in a dilemma that we didn't cause but must deal with because it affects us."

The PCB gets into the food chain, possibly affecting marine life in all of Puget Sound. It would affect humans if contaminated seafood were eaten.

The chemical is nonsoluable in water, heavy and has an indefinite life span. In some respects it's similar to the pesticide DDT.

The Corps and the federal Environmental Protection Agency are dealing with the Duwamish spill now as though it were an emergency, even though the spill occurred more then a year ago.

Bob Parker, Corps spokesman, and Ron Lee, from the EPA, said government agencies took a year to decide who was at fault for the spill before firm steps were taken to find a disposal site.

The Corps also was dealing with the Port of Seattle on an alternate disposal site.

Parker said the Corps would construct an impermeable dike to contain PCB-contaminated spoils within a fill proposed for the boat launch area. Lee admitted the EPA doesn't know everything about the chemical.

Anderson contacted the offices of Sen. Henry M. Jackson and U.S. Rep. Lloyd Meeds, relaying concern and a need for an overall federal program to dispose of contaminated wastes.

"I can't understand how we got into the middle of this thing. They're not only dealing with this now on an emergency basis, but it has become our emergency," Anderson said.

The city, Port of Everett and Snohomish County jointly are developing the boat launch.