

Westinghouse to build incinerator for PCBs

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Bloomington, Ind. — Westinghouse Electric Corp. announced Tuesday it will build a \$13 million incinerator here to burn PCBs that have contaminated at least nine sites in Monroe County.

The agreement between the company — which used polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) to produce electrical capacitors here — and city officials came after six years of negotiations. The agreement transfers responsibility for local PCB cleanup to the company.

Details of the pact are expected to be worked out within two months, with ground-breaking on the incinerator set for 1985.

BOTH PARTIES hope to use municipal solid wastes as a fuel source for the incinerator to burn the PCBs, which are suspected cancer-causing agents. They must obtain U.S. Environmental Protection Agency approval of the process.

"This is a very happy day for us," Mayor Tomilea Allison said after the announcement was made jointly by her and company officials. "The city is anxious to work with the company to bring this about."

Robert Pugliese, Westinghouse vice president and general counsel, said, "We've had unfavorable publicity toward Westinghouse in the past. We're ready to put all that behind us now."

Westinghouse used PCBs in the

production of electrical capacitors in Bloomington between 1958 and 1972. The PCBs were made by Monsanto Chemical Co.

HEALTH OFFICIALS found that old capacitors, brought to at least nine unauthorized dump sites in Monroe County, leaked PCBs. Three of the sites are on the EPA's Superfund list of the worst hazardous waste sites in the nation.

PCBs forced the closing of the Winston-Thomas sewage treatment plant here, where sludge was found to be contaminated with the toxic chemical.

In 1981, Bloomington filed a \$329 million lawsuit seeking damages against Westinghouse and Monsanto.

Last year, Westinghouse and the city began looking at engineering solutions to PCB contamination. But in August talks broke down and the city prepared to go to court again.

Officials declined to comment Tuesday on whether the suit will be dismissed with the new agreement.

THEY SAID Monsanto will be approached to join the pact. Westinghouse has promised to shoulder the full incinerator costs regardless. "We'll do the job if necessary without Monsanto," Pugliese said. "We're doing this on our own."

PCB cleanup has cost Bloomington more than \$300,000. Officials feared the toxic wastes were leaking into subsurface streams and could contaminate fish and wildlife and were dangerous to nearby residents.

The issue of possible reimbursement is expected to be discussed further by the city and the companies.

The three Superfund sites are the Lemon Lane dump, Neal's Landfill and Bennett's property, all just west of the city.