

TELEGRAM TO WILLIAM RUCKELSHAUS READS:

February 8, 1972

THIS IS TO URGE THAT YOUR AGENCY TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION TO CORRECT AN ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARD OF PROBABLE GRAVE DIMENSIONS CREATED BY PITTSBURGH CORNING CORP. AT ITS PLANT NEAR TYLER, TEXAS.

FIRST, THE COMPANY HAS BEEN DUMPING WASTE ASBESTOS IN OPEN FIELDS AND PITS IN THE VICINITY OF THE PLANT, THUS PERMITTING ASBESTOS FIBERS TO BLOW ABOUT THE COUNTRYSIDE. IMMEDIATE ACTION SHOULD BE TAKEN TO BURY ALL SUCH WASTE.

SECOND, THE COMPANY HAS SOLD TENS OF THOUSANDS OF EMPTY BURLAP BAGS, IN WHICH ASBESTOS WAS SKIPPED INTO THE PLANT, TO NURSERIES IN THE AREA. NURSERIES USE THESE BAGS TO WRAP ROSE CUTTINGS AND OTHER NURSERY STOCK FOR SHIPMENT TO RETAILERS AND GARDENERS THROUGHOUT THE NATION. TYLER IS PERHAPS THE NATION'S LARGEST ROSE-GROWING CENTER. THESE BAGS ARE HEAVILY POLLUTED WITH ASBESTOS FIBERS AND THIS POSES A HEALTH HAZARD TO NURSERY WORKMEN AND POSSIBLY TO OTHERS, INCLUDING ULTIMATE CONSUMERS, WHO HANDLE THE NURSERY PRODUCTS.

WE UNDERSTAND THAT PITTSBURGH CORNING STOPPED SELLING THESE BAGS SOME MONTHS AGO, BUT WE KNOW THAT THOUSANDS OF THEM STILL ARE IN USE.

A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE DANGER SHOULD BE MADE, BAGS IN THE CHANNELS OF COMMERCE SHOULD BE TRACED, AND POSSIBLY ALL BAGS IN CIRCULATIONS SHOULD BE RECALLED.

FINALLY, WE RECOMMEND THAT PITTSBURGH CORNING BE PLACED UNDER SURVEILLANCE TO PREVENT A REPETITION OF THESE DANGEROUS ACTIVITIES IN OTHER LOCALITIES. THE COMPANY IS CEASING OPERATIONS AT TYLER, BUT JUDGING FROM ITS PAST PRACTICES WE HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE THAT IT WILL REPEAT THIS CARELESS CONDUCT AT OTHER LOCATIONS.

SUBSTANTIATING FACTS MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH AND THE OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH ADMINISTRATION, BOTH AGENCIES HAVING MADE INSPECTIONS AND STUDIES OF THE SITUATION. ALSO, THIS UNION'S WASHINGTON REPRESENTATIVE, ANTHONY MAZZOCCHI, 1126 SIXTEENTH ST., N. W., IS AVAILABLE TO ASSIST YOU AND PROVIDE MORE DETAIL.

A. F. GRÓSPIRON, PRESIDENT, OIL, CHEMICAL & ATOMIC WORKERS INTL. UNION



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