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'NO KNOWN CONNECTIONS'

Flats PCB Report Given

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Officials of Rockwell International said Thursday there is "no known connection" between the Rocky Flats nuclear weapons plant and the recent finding of minute amounts of toxic chemical compounds in sediment from the Great Western Reservoir.

The reservoir supplies water to Broomfield.

The compounds—called polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB)—have a variety of chemical forms and have been used industrially for about 45 years.

Primarily they have been used as nonflammable coolants in transformers and capacitors like those of the Rocky Flats plant and Public Service Co. of Colorado, as heat-transfer agents, as hydraulic lubricants and in plasticizer applications.

There is no relationship between PCB and radioactive material, Rockwell officials stressed.

The amounts of PCB found, Rockwell officials said, pose no known hazard to persons using water from the reservoir.

"The regional office of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) sees no concern over the findings," said Felix Owen, Rockwell's information services director. "To date we've had no PCB releases in the detectable range by EPA standards."

Owen said Rockwell and the EPA have been conducting tests on water from the reservoir "but we haven't tied the Rocky Flats plant to the presence of the element."

Robert Yoder, the company's director of health, safety and environment, didn't rule out Rocky Flats' being connected with the low-level contamination.

"Our source as well as others could have contributed to the sedimentation contamination in the reservoir . . . Any industrial facility with transformers could have," Yoder said.

The Rockwell officials, joined by environmental-sciences manager Milton Thompson, pointed out that when PCB dangers became known in the early 1970s, countermeasures were taken by Dow Chemical Co., the previous operator of the Rocky Flats plant.

Those moves included:

—The diking of 21 PCB-impregnated transformers to prevent leakage into soil or water.

—Replacement of more than 30 PCB-using capacitors, devices used to enhance electrical power flow.

"The diking was completed and we don't know of any capacitors (containing PCBs) still on site," Owen said.

Rockwell issued the protective statements when it became known that the EPA had found from 10 to 68 parts per billion (66b) of PCB in Great Western Reservoir. An average of 34 ppb was obtained on five readings from one sample, Owen said.

He noted that PCBs are widely dispensed in the United States.

Owen said that no federal standard has been set for PCB in sediment but that recommended by the Food and Drug Administration is a maximum of .01 ppb for waterways with fish entering man's food cycle.

"The acceptable, maximum discharge of PCB's from industrial plants is 1 ppb discharged into water," Owen said. "To date, what has been found (in monthly analyses) at Rocky Flats is below any detectable level."

He stressed that EPA's figures from reservoir sediment represent "preliminary findings" of the first of a series of tests of waterways and sediment "to determine if there is a problem with PCB in Colorado and other states."

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