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RUN-OFF FROM STREETS ADDS TO STREAM POLLUTION

Storm water run-off from city streets may be adding significant amounts of lead, zinc, and other heavy metals into the Nation's waterways, according to a study released today by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Pesticides and other similar chemicals were also found in street samplings made in the study during 1971. These materials are flushed into storm sewers during periods of heavy rain.

About 75 percent of the total weight of these materials were polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB's), a class of persistent chemicals similar in effects to DDT.

Presently, the primary use of PCB's is in re-circulating systems such as industrial heat exchangers. Data are lacking on current concentrations in the environment, but EPA has investigations underway to obtain more detailed information on this problem.

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The study, "Water Pollution Aspects of Street Surface Contaminants," states that street run-off may contribute considerably more pollution than the city's sanitary sewage during periods of moderate to heavy rain.

The major part of street surface contaminants was found to be sand and silt-like matter. However, none of the materials of this particle size are very effectively removed by current street cleaning practices, the study says.

The study was made for EPA's Office of Research and Monitoring by the IRS Research Company of San Mateo, California, under a \$309,000 contract.

In the study, samples of street contaminants were taken in eight cities -- San Jose, California; Phoenix, Arizona; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Baltimore, Maryland; Seattle, Washington; Atlanta, Georgia; Tulsa, Oklahoma; and Bucyrus, Ohio, and analyzed for their physical, chemical, and biological properties. These data were used to compute total street loadings. Calculations on run-off from street surfaces were based on a mathematical model, and information was developed for major land-use areas within cities such as residential, commercial, and industrial.

Commenting on the report, EPA Assistant Administrator for Research and Monitoring Stanley M. Greenfield said: "While not cause for alarm, the information presented in this report does show that more attention must be paid to the problem of pollution from storm-runoff, especially as wastes from industry and other municipal sources are reduced."

The recent amendments to the Federal Water Pollution Control Act give EPA authority for demonstration grants to control this type of pollution and also say that consideration must be given to pollution from storm-runoff in the development of area wide waste treatment management plans.

The 237-page publication is available from the U.S. Governmental Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402, for \$3. The order number is EPI 23/2: 72-081.

Limited copies for the press are available at the EPA Press Office, 401 M Street, SW., Washington, D.C. 20460, tel. (202) 755-0344.
