REPORT TO SUBCOMMITTEE ON ASBESTOS IN THE ENVIRONMENT

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A. The occupational health risks from asbestos exposure have been adequately documented. The risk to public health associated with exposure to airborne concentrations of asbestos fibers in the general environment can not at present be clearly defined.

This subcommittee, having given careful thought to three identifiable situations which could result in increasing the concentrations of airborne asbestos fibers above the normal background level makes the following recommendations:

1. Guidelines should be established for industry to utilize in the control of emissions from manufacturing and processing asbestos.
2. Measures should be taken to decrease air pollutant emissions, including asbestos, caused by braking and acceleration at toll plazas on limited access highways.
3. Guidelines should be prepared for use by employers and employees at demolition and construction sites where airborne asbestos fibers potentially briefly expose the public. National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants already contain reporting and notification to EPA of demolition and renovation of buildings. (See Title 40, CFR, Parts 60-80 attached. See 61.22 (d), pg. 294.)

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B. Having considered the above recommendations very carefully, we believe that:

1. The state should delay the introduction of an ambient air standard because of the unreliability of the available techniques for the purpose of law enforcement. A vigorous effort should be pursued, in collaboration with the University of Connecticut, Yale University and the asbestos industry in Connecticut, to develop an acceptable measurement method and state-wide program and to report progress to the Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection within one year. Until a satisfactory monitoring program is feasible it will not be possible to promulgate an enforceable standard.
2. In order to decrease air pollution caused by automobile emissions during braking and acceleration, including potential release of airborne asbestos fibers, a positive step to take would be to make all toll plazas in Connecticut one way. Both the Connecticut Turnpike and the Wilbur Cross and Merritt Parkways should be considered for this action.
3. The state should establish a licensing procedure under the control of the Department of Labor in collaboration with the Department of Health Services, requiring all asbestos exposed workers to be properly instructed in the handling of asbestos-containing products and to be fully informed of the health risks associated with this material.

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The cost for the training program shall be recovered from the licensing fee.

C. The subcommittee would like to indicate that the above recommendations are based upon information derived from the study of the scientific literature and are therefore based upon "worst-case assumptions" because of the inevitably long lapsed time period between first exposure and demonstration of an adverse effect.

Conditions in industry and in the general environment have changed in the past decade since the passage of the OSH Act in 1970 and the establishment of the Environmental Protection Agency. The legislature should therefore have a "sunset clause" in any acts which it sees fit to promulgate on the subject which would allow cognizance to be taken of advances in knowledge and utilization of best available technology to achieve compliance.

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HWBUI0012258