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B. J. Keller

Goodrich spokesman testifies**'Zero-vinyl-chloride would kill industry'**

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WASHINGTON — A proposed "zero" standard for exposure to vinyl chloride would shut down his industry and mean the loss of more than 1.5 million jobs and billions of dollars in sales, a chemical-industry executive said today.

That was the testimony of Anton Vittone, president of the B. F. Goodrich Chemical Co., at today's opening round of hearings on a proposed federal standard that "no detectible level" of vinyl-chloride gas be permitted in the air in plastic plants where it's used.

Though the plastics-industry testimony was not scheduled until later today, The Society of the Plastics Industry released its proposal for a step-by-step reduction of permissible vinyl-chloride levels over a period of years.

The first government witnesses at the hearings were challenged sharply by plastics-industry attorneys.

The testimony of U. S. Department of Labor and National Cancer Institute officials that the new standard is necessary to protect plastic workers from exposure to the cancer-causing chemical was questioned by representatives of several companies. It appeared to be a concerted effort by the industry to get the "zero" limit revised.

The industry proposes a new standard to begin Oct. 5, when the Department of Labor's emergency standard that allows 50 parts of vinyl chloride per million parts of air expires. Under the industry proposal, an average daily level of up to 10 parts per million would be permitted without respiratory protection in plants where vinyl chloride is made, and 25 parts per million where polyvinyl chloride plastic is made—such as in the Louisville plant.

Levels above 25 parts per million in vinyl-chloride plants and above 40 parts per million in polyvinyl-chloride plants

would require the use of respiratory protection, Vittone's proposal said.

By October of 1976, the level of vinyl-chloride gas would be down to an average of 10 parts per million in polyvinyl-chloride plants. And by October 1977, the level would be reduced under the industry proposal to an average of 5 parts per million in vinyl chloride production plants.

The federal standard earlier permitted 500 parts of vinyl chloride gas per million parts of air. After the findings of cancer deaths, the standard was lowered to 50 parts per million on an emergency basis and then, last month, a federal job-safety agency advised that it could not "describe a safe exposure level" to vinyl chloride, and the "zero" standard was proposed.

"Such a commitment cannot be accomplished overnight since, in certain areas,

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**No-vinyl-chloride
rule said to be
fatal to industry**

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the technology for accomplishing it is, as yet, not developed," Vittone's statement said.

The plastics industry proposal also notes, "At this precarious state of its knowledge, The Society of the Plastics Industry believes that misplaced reliance on mere suspicions rather than proven data, or precipitous and emotional reaction to such incomplete information, together with a narrowly construed interpretation of interests, could lead to major economic consequences."

This industry concern was shown in its attorneys' questioning of today's first speakers at the Department of Labor's main auditorium.

Dr. Daniel P. Boyd, director of the Office of Standards Development for the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, reviewed the history of the con-

cern over vinyl chloride that started with the Goodrich announcement of two workers' deaths in Louisville in January. "Our present judgment is that vinyl chloride is a carcinogenic (cancer-producing)," Boyd said. He noted that 19 deaths, including 13 in this country, have been linked to working with the chemical.

And Boyd added that the most recent data from Italian researcher Cesare Maltoni shows that other cancers besides the rare liver cancer, angiosarcoma, have been found in laboratory rats and mice exposed to the current emergency standard of 50 parts per million for periods of less than a year.

Dr. Herman Kravbill, of the National Cancer Institute, then said that preliminary medical data from Maltoni and other sources shows that vinyl chloride could cause cancer in perhaps 5 per cent of the persons exposed to it.

The hearings will continue all week.

And the federal job-safety agency's Dr. Boyd emphasized at the beginning of today's hearings that "we regard the proposed standard as just that—a proposal."

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