

The Greensboro Record
GREENSBORO, N. C.

D. 31,307

AUG 16 1978 *elc*

Early disposal was haphazard

RALEIGH (AP) — A state official says large quantities of PCBs were disposed of in city dumps and landfills with little concern for their potential impact on public health before the danger of the toxic chemical was discovered in the 1950s.

Robert Carter, state chief water quality official, said strict safety rules for PCB dumping were imposed by the chemical disposal industry about 10 years ago. He said more recent disposal sites are probably safe.

Carter said PCBs were discovered in the late 1800s and appeared in industry during the 1930s.

"It (PCB) is in city landfills, dumps and lots of places where industrial wastes of that nature are disposed of," Carter said Tuesday. "It's in printer's ink, solvents, paints, heat exchangers. Wherever cities have dumped that sort of stuff, that's where they are now."

Today's disposal guarded

"The one hope is that since this material pretty well binds up in a soil column, it will pretty much stay where it is," he added. "The location of most landfills has been pretty well thought out, particularly in relation to water supplies."

Some old dumps where PCBs are known to have been disposed of have been tested for possible leakage, especially where it could threaten water supplies. He said no contamination has been found.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates there are 440 million pounds of PCB in the nation, with between 70 and 80 percent of it buried as industrial waste or in discarded equipment.

PCBs have been suspected of causing cancer and birth defects in laboratory animals, but tests indicate PCB doesn't cause cancer in humans, according to the Monsanto Chemical Corp., formerly the major manufacturer of the chemical. Monsanto stopped making PCBs in 1971.