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B U L L E T I N

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December 20, 1984

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA) RESPONSE TO NATURAL
RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL (NRDC) PETITION TO PROHIBIT USE
OF ASBESTOS IN AUTOMOTIVE BRAKE LININGS

In earlier bulletins, the Institute advised on the petition submitted by the NRDC asking a prohibition on the use of asbestos in automotive brake linings. Our last bulletin on this subject was that of November 13, 1984, where we enclosed a copy of the comments the Institute submitted relating to the NRDC petition.

The EPA has now replied to the NRDC petition. A copy of the response is enclosed. There are some gross errors in the EPA response, particularly in the comments on "Light and medium vehicle drum brake linings. There are other comments that are debatable. However, it is not necessary to critique this response.

While the EPA states that they are granting the petition, they will not now go to the rulemaking process. They will gather more information on the merits of the petition and in particular the availability of substitute materials. The EPA did not concur with NRDC that the continued use of asbestos brake linings "presents an unreasonable risk to health." Based on this action, it is unlikely that the EPA will propose a prohibition on the use of asbestos in friction materials in the near future.

In summary, the EPA action leaves this question about where it was before the NRDC filed its petition.

We have not as yet received the text of the EPA document that will appear in the FEDERAL REGISTER. The attached is for your information.

E. W. Drislane
Executive Director

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