U.S. Health Official Asks Immediate Ban On Hudson Pollutant

WASHINGTON, Sept. 8 (AP) —A Federal health official has called upon the Environmental Protection Agency to order an immediate halt to a brand of industrial pollution that New York State officials say may have caused "irreparable damage" to the Hudson River.

"While the current state of our knowledge as to the biological activity of these substances is not complete, we feel that available evidence indicates that immediate action should be taken to terminate the discharge of polychlorinated byphenlys," said Dr. Theodore Cooper, assistant secretary for health in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

"Such action would be in the best interests of protection of the public health and safety by eventually terminating PCB entry into the food chain and subsequent exposure to the American people," Dr. Cooper added. He made the statement in a letter dated Aug. 25 to the Environmental Protection Agency's administrator, Russell E. Train. Contents of the letter were not released until today, a day after the state took its first step to stop the General Electric Company from discharging the pollutant into the 306-mile long Hudson from plants at Ford, Edward and Hudson Falls, north of Albany.

Mr. Cooper said PCB was a "suspected cancer-causing chemical."

Other Federal officials say PCB is fatal to fish eggs, may cause liver cancer in rats and can cause weight and hair loss in monkeys. Its effect on human beings is still being studied.

Yesterday, state Environmental Conservation Commissioner Ogden R. Reid said General Electric might have caused "irreparable damage to the Hudson River" by discharging PCB into the river for the last 20 years. He issued a formal complaint against the company, headquartered in Fairfield, Conn., and warned New Yorkers against eating fish taken from the river, particularly large-mouth bass and striped bass. A departmental hearing on the complaint was set for Oct. 6.

Hudson River waters were declared fit for drinking today by the State Health Department, which reported no hazard in 11 drinking water supplies from the Hudson and Mohawk rivers.

"The latest sampling shows there is no hazard from PCB in drinking water," said Robert P. Whalen, State Health Commissioner.

The survey found PCB in minuscule amounts, well below Federal levels for drinking water, the Helath Department said.

HOMOSEXUAL RIGHTS STIR RIVAL GROUPS

Two groups, one opposed to a bill that would prohibit discrimination against homosexuals in housing and employment, and one in favor of the measure, made preparations yesterday for hearings on Thursday by the City Council's General Welfare Committee.

The Coalition of Conscience, which supports the measure, gathered a group of clergymen, educators and elected officials at a morning news press conference at the Commodore Hotel, where they urged supporters of the bill to wear the symbol of their campaign. The symbol, a button with a black background on which there is a pink triangle, which during World War II was the symbol that Nazis required imprisoned homosexuals to wear.

The newly formed Council for Community Consciousness, a 25-member group that opposes the bill, issued a statement saying that the proposed extension of the city's equal rights laws to bar discrimination on the basis of "sexual orientation" unfairly imputed "bigotry, prejudice and intolerance" to those who did not accept homosexuality as a normal way of life.

Recall Is Denied by Schlitz

The Joseph Schlitz Brewing Company categorically denied yesterday an announcement by the Food and Drug Administration that 515,852 cases of beer produced at its Winston-Salem brewery last June were being recalled.

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