Ruckelshaus, 'hit list' keep EPA pot boiling

United Press International

WASHINGTON — New charges of a color-coded "hit list" of Environmental Protection Agency officials targeted for firing emerged today as William D. Ruckelshaus prepared to meet with senior White House officials today to discuss taking back his old job as EPA chief.

The list of 25 to 50 Senior Executive Service managers was compiled in late 1981 and "prominently displayed" on a long board in the office of W. Clifton Miller, an aide to former EPA Administrator Anne Burford who handled personnel matters, one official said.

EPA officials who saw the chart told United Press International Sunday that most of those ticketed for firing, in apparent disregard of civil service laws, were viewed as Democrats or strong environmentalists. Several were later demoted or given unwanted transfers to other cities last year, resulting in their dismissals or resignations, the officials said.

An EPA official who said he saw the list recalled each name was followed by one of three color codes: a brown dot for career bureaucrats who must be fired, a second color stating that the bureaucrat should be removed from his sensitive position, and a third color — black or blue — for administration loyalists.

Rep. James Scheuer (D-N.Y.), whose House Science and Technology subcommittee is investigating widespread allegations of personnel abuses at EPA, said the disclosures of the list provide "further evidence of the pervasive political manipulation of this agency."

Ruckelshaus was to confer today with White House senior staff members about the conditions under which he would accept the post, the Washington Post reported.

But White House spokesman Anson Franklin said, "I'm not aware of Mr. Ruckelshaus' plans in Washington or elsewhere."

The agency is facing investigations by six congressional subcommittees and the FBI of its management of the $1.6 billion Superfund toxic waste cleanup program.

Jesup FROM 1A

Ledbetter said state scientists discovered the leakage of PCBs, or polychlorinated biphenyls, during visits about six weeks ago following a year-long monitoring of the company's warehouse site. City officials were notified Thursday.

PCBs are used primarily as lubricants and as fluids in electrical transformers and capacitors, and formerly in inks, adhesives, pesticides and carbonless duplicating paper. They were manufactured in the United States from 1929 until 1977, when potential health hazards were confirmed.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency banned PCBs after tests with laboratory animals showed that the chemicals can cause cancer and birth defects. PCBs are also associated with skin diseases, sterility and liver diseases.

Once in the soil and food chain, PCBs pose a long-term threat because they resist decomposition.

There is some alarm here that the PCBs might have been spread by some of the heaviest rains in the past decade, said Greene, who is a former state legislator. As a member of the House Natural Resources Committee, he helped draft Georgia's hazardous waste laws.

Ledbetter said he expected the Holley company to pay $100,000 in fines as well as clean up the site but added that he did not believe the mishap here is a "major spill."

In a related matter, Holley Electric has been found to be handling hazardous material without state approval, Ledbetter said.

"Based on the fact that they spilled some PCBs into the environment and brought in (hazardous) materials they were not approved to handle, I have asked the state attorney general to develop enforcement action against the company," the state official said.

Ledbetter said the company had violated the Georgia Hazardous Waste Management Law by not getting state approval before transporting the explosive chemicals to the site. The federal permit only covers storage.

In recounting the chronology of the problem, Greene said he has known the PCBs were being stored at the site in 1981, when he notified state EPD officials.

State officials examined the site, and said there was nothing they could do to prevent storage of PCBs at the warehouse because the company was operating with a federal permit, the mayor said.

Ledbetter said the state had been monitoring the site over the past several months, and, in a November 1982 inspection, did not detect the PCBs. However, recent laboratory results from tests taken in January of this year showed the presence of the PCBs around the warehouse, he said.

Ledbetter notified Green Thursday of the test results, but told the mayor that a more pressing danger was the presence of the truck loaded with chemicals, Green said. The truck contained a load of chemicals, including picric acid — which becomes highly unstable when aged — that had been picked up by a Holley truck in New Jersey.

Greene said he then contacted the owner of the company, Lynwood Holley, who lives near Jacksonville, Fla., and began discussing with him the removal of the explosive chemicals and the PCBs.

An explosion-proof truck was taken to the site, and about 9:10 p.m. Saturday, the truck bearing the explosive chemicals was escorted by Jesup police out of town. The material was taken temporarily to Fort Stewart, Greene said.

Federal law requires proper disposal of PCBs, and the Holley company had been storing old electrical transformers at the Jesup site as well as emptying the liquid PCBs from the transformers into 55-gallon drums. The chemicals would later be shipped to an approved hazardous waste site in Alabama, Ledbetter said.

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