SAN RAFAEL, CALIF.
INDEPENDENT
JOURNAL
A 44,231

SEP 23 1981

Today's editorials

PCB a 'suspect' only at this point

EDITORIAL

The media has been suspected, and not without justification, of calling PCB (polychlorinated biphenyls) a cancer-causing chemical compound.

WE HOPE we are not among the suspects, but if we are we accept chiding (if not chastisement) from Pacific Gas & Electric Co. which uses the chemical as a fire resistant insulating fluid in electrical transformers and capacitors.

We use the word "suspected" because that is the one, according to PG&E, we — and the rest of the media — should have been using to describe the possible effects of PCB. In other words, the use of "cancer causing" as an adjective to describe the chemical is a bit off base. Such a link may, indeed, be suspected, but the connection between PCB and cancer has not been "established."

ANOTHER WORD that puts the subject into focus as a "scare" news item is "lethal." But when there is a PBC spill, as there was this month in San Rafael, it behooves the press to say something about it. That is necessary, partly, because of the recent furor over the substances. If there were a spill and we said nothing in our news reports, we'd shirk our duty to inform readers.

PG&E, of course, is not maintaining there may not be suspicion about PBC. It has admitted there can be property damage in a spill, and the company is willing to pay for damage to property. The company is replacing PBC capacitors.

WE ALSO have this claim from Monsanto, a former manufacturer of PCB: Tests have shown that while exposure to PCBs can cause temporary skin problems, there "are no clinically observable long-term health effects including the occurrence of cancer."

Monsanto stopped production when it was found that PCB accumulated in the environment. PCB production was banned two years ago by the Environmental Protection Agency.

AND NOW PG&E is replacing PCB with mineral oil, and agencies — such as fire departments — which should know the location of PCB capacitors still in use can find out by contacting the utility.

Replacement of the substance is a positive step toward ending any nagging doubts about the effects of PCB. It may be "suspect." It may be that is enough for its removal. Meanwhile, we'll leave it to the experts to decide on "establishment" of causes and effects as concerns chemical substances.

6F Sun., Oct. 25, 1981

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Collagen Corp. Offer Is Fully Subscribed

The initial offering of Collagen Corp. Friday was fully subscribed — in fact, the biomedical research firm placed 50,000 more shares than the 1 million originally intended — but the $13 price was about one-third less than company officials had hoped.

Monsanto Co. owns 1.1 million shares, or just over 20 percent, of Collagen.

Collagen, based in Palo Alto, Calif., manufactures and markets a medical implant that's proved successful in tests at rebuilding [illegible] human tissue.

The $13 price is nearly double the $7 [illegible] paid for its holdings.

Company officials had expected to sell the issue for $17 to $20. Collagen is listed on the OTC under the symbol CGEN. Newhard, Cook & Co. of St. Louis was part of the underwriting team headed by [illegible] Barney, Harris Upham & Co.

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