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Metal Plating Industry Hit Hard by EPA Standards

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Promising that some stabilization of Environmental Protection Agnecy standards is coming, John McGlennon acknowledged yesterday that metal plating industries in the state are the most affected by EPA rulings.

McGlennon, New England region administrator with EPA said, "Metal platers are subject to the most stringent regulations and will have to make a substantial investment. This is because they are discharging highly toxic materials into waterways."

Adding that metal plating guides have changed several times, McGlennon said that the differences between EPA and metal plating industries will "probably be adjudicated in court. Once this happens, those standards will be ap-

Both EPA and the manufacturers will know clearly what is expected. It has been difficult for the industry, "McGlennon admitted. He could not give a time estimate on the eventual stabilizaton of standards.

Phone Conference

Conducting a phone conference with newspapers in Southeastern Massachusetts McGlennon outlines the critical issues facing the area.

Most important to the southeast section of the state is the potential on shore impact of oil on the outer continental shelf; the presence of inert polychlorinatedbiphenol (PCB) in New Bedford waterways; general water quality and the identification of toxic substances prior to their distribution, according to McGlennon.

Following the release of the Department of Interior Bureau of Land Management draft statement, public hearings over on shore development tied to offshore drilling will be conducted. McGlennon estimated that the statement will be released in the fall with hearings continuing through spring.

"There will be two kinds of on shore developments, support for the rigs on the shelf, basically maintainence supply depots, and developments for petroleum processing."

He added that it is unlikely that a refinery will be located in Southeastern Massachusetts. "There are three principal limiting factors for locating a refinery availability of land, water and the amount of processing "occidents already in the air at the site."

A refinery would need a minimum of 1,500 acres to build on which would place it well outside any urban area and water would have to be available in quantities like those produced by the Connecticut and Merrimack Rivers, McGlennon said.

Ruled Out

He also added that the Fall River and New Bedford areas, mentioned as posible sites for a refinery, presently have the greatest number of "occident" violations in the state which would prevent the additon of a new source.

On the general water quality levels McGlennon sees a dramatic change for the better occurring over the next few years. His main concern was that communities in the state will not be able to take advantage of the $300 million in federal funding for sewage treatment facilities.

"Local applications have to come out of town meetings in March and April," McGlennon said. "If they don't, the funding will be used somewhere else."

Applications are being processed by the state with the full time assistance of EPA personnel. "It's more difficult to evaluate the non-conventional treatment plants and decide whether they should be funded but we will get them done also," McGlennon said.

The evidence of PCB in New Bedford waterways was tied by McGlennon to the increasing discovery oif toxic substances everywhere.

Dangeous

PCB is an inert substance that does not break down or decompose. It is a heavy, oil like liquid used as a universal insulator in transformers, in everything from televisions to power plants. PCB is also used to smooth out paints such as latex.

"It works like DDT," McGlennon said. Primarily found in fish, especially striped bass, PCB cannot be eliminated when ingested and builds up in the system. McGlennon added that extensive testing has been done on strippers found off the coast and that levels are still minimal.

"The potential for high PCB levels is there, though," he said, "and PCB is only one of six chemical compounds we have identified as possible carcinogenic (cancer causing) in the past six-months.

"We have to identify toxic effects prior to the time the substance is distributed," McGlennon said. "Once a substance is marketed, we have to have an iron-clad case to have it recalled."

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