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City water study probers named

By DON BOXMEYER
Staff Writer

A committee of experts has been named by City Councilman Leonard Levine to determine how safe St. Paul's water is to drink.

Levine, chairman of the St. Paul water board, said the eight-member committee will be asked to study the water for the presence of carcinogens, chlororganics and a toxic industrial chemical, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs).

LEVINE WAS given authority by the board last May to form the special study group following disclosure by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that St. Paul's water has one of the highest levels of organic impurities — particularly chloroform — of 83 Midwest cities tested.

St. Paul ranked No. 72 out of 83 cities in terms of water purity.

Both the EPA and the water department, however, said there was little cause for concern.

CHLOROFORM, the EPA said, was produced through the chlorination process which is used to kill bacteria in the water.

"It's possible we may have to change our water treatment methods," Levine said Friday. "We may have to buy new equipment and conduct different tests. The point is, that the water must be safe for the 85,000 homes we serve."

Chairing the committee will be Dr. Steve Chapman, research director for the Minnesota Public Interest Research Group (MPIRG). Chapman is a microbiologist.

OTHER COMMITTEE members are: James Bechtold, administrator of environmental sciences for the Northern States Power Co.; Steve Gadler, a member of

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Water: Probers are named

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the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (PCA) board and a registered engineer; Dr. Daniel Knuth, a PCA hydrologist; Dr. Rodney Loper, University of Minnesota psychologist and president of Clear Air, Clear Water, Unlimited.

And Dr. Dwight Martin, medical internist; Dr. Richard Melerotto, associate professor of biology at St. Thomas College, and Dr. Ellis Wyatt, chairman of the biology department at Hamline University.

In addition to the chloroform review, the committee will be concerned with the recently found presence of potentially hazardous PCBs in fish taken from the Mississippi River, a source of water for St. Paul.

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