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New water risks?

Dr. Donald Mount, director of the National Water Quality Laboratory in Duluth, said Wednesday there are other substances besides asbestos in Lake Superior water which may be a cause for future concern.

Mount made the statement in an interview following a meeting called by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to discuss water filtration. The corps is required to continue its filtration program under an order issued last week by the U.S. Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals in St. Louis, Mo.

Following the session, Duluth Mayor Robert Beaudin said the city may purchase "a quantity" of filters from Nuclepore Corp., a California firm which has been supplying the units to restaurants and city firehalls, and make them available to homeowners.

This, said Beaudin, would allow homeowners to install their own filters and buy replacement cartridges at a lower than retail price.

Beaudin said the city still is only investigating the possibility of buying the filters, but added, "I think we'll be buying a quantity of them."

He said a city investigation has revealed there may have been "some excess profit" in sale of the filters at the retail level.

Mount said tests at the Environmental Protection Agency's Duluth water laboratory indicate the presence of the insecticide DDT and the industrial compound PCB in Lake Superior water.

The levels of these chemicals, he said, are low, but he added, "I can't say they won't be a cause for concern in the future."

Friday, a spokesman for the U.S. Interior Department said PCBs (poly chlorinated biphenyl, an industrial chemical used in electrical transformer oils) may ruin attempts to restock the Great Lakes fishing industry. The PCBs, he said, are interfering with re-

Continued on Page 9, Column 1

Risks?

From Page One

production and are building up in fish to the point the fish are banned from sale.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration bans sale of fish containing more than 5 parts per million of PCBs. Dr. Wayland Swain, director of the Lake Superior Basin Studies Center, has said fish sampled by his unit show concentrations of PCBs of 8 parts per million.

Participants in Wednesday's session included corps representatives, the mayors of Duluth, Silver Bay, Two Harbors, Proctor and Beaver Bay. Each agreed to send a representative to a session Monday in Duluth to plan for continuing the filtration program.

The session is scheduled for 9 a.m. in the Water & Gas Department's conference room.

Maj. Norman Hintz, St. Paul, deputy district engineer for the corps' St. Paul District, said the corps now plans only to furnish free replacement filter cartridges to firehalls, schools, restaurants and other public locations dispensing filtered water.

The St. Paul District, Hintz said, can't make any new installations of filters under its present authorization, but would forward any requests for new units to its headquarters in Washington.

His statement was in reply to a question from Beaudin on whether the corps would honor requests for new filters which had been made before the corps' decision to quit funding the program at the end of this month.

Hintz said, "No." However, he asked the mayors to prepare lists of the approximate numbers of requests for new units for submission to Washington.

Mount said the water lab would help in a program to monitor the filtration effectiveness. He said a concern now is reported failures of some filtration cartridges, but added, "We have no reason to expect a big problem" with filter failures.

Hintz asked the mayors of each community to undertake an education program on possible dangers of drinking unfiltered water.

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