The People's Forum

to Ortiz & Wiechmann

Governor's inaction on PCBs is criticized

To the Editor: The wheels of justice are turning ever so slowly from Raleigh concerning our governor's action regarding the PCB problem — or more accurately stated, Gov. Hunt's inaction.

It appears that, regardless of consequences or equity, the governor's office is determined to place the PCB-contaminated soil in one or more North Carolina counties. I quote The Wall Street Journal of June 29, 1978: "Permissible levels in food of toxic PCBs are being sharply lowered by the FDA. The new limits affect fish, poultry and dairy products shipped in interstate commerce after Aug. 28. New evidence indicates that these chemicals are more toxic than previously thought. PCBs seem to be most concentrated in freshwater fish, such as coho and chinook, salmon from the Great Lakes, freshwater trout and catfish. The lower levels could result in the loss of about $6 million of commercial fish a year, the FDA estimated."

In addition, FDA Commissioner Donald Kennedy sent letters to governors of 11 states urging them to take additional action to protect residents against PCB-contaminated fish.

Scientists have repeatedly stated that PCBs can be safely and completely destroyed by incineration. The planned incineration method appears to be the only way to effectively get rid of it!

The EPA expects to conduct a testburn, largely to measure the effectiveness of monitoring equipment. Small quantities of PCBs are to be incinerated at 2700 degrees Fahrenheit. Simply stated, it's better to have them burned under control than dumped somewhere (anywhere). The federal government has set rigid rules for burning the stuff so thoroughly that 99.9 percent of what is incinerated is supposed to be destroyed.

All of the proceding information is available to the governor's office. Why don't we, the taxpaying citizens of North Carolina, hear about it? Is incineration the only possible alternative? Or, shall we bury it and knowingly expect the worse — known sickness and ultimate destruction. Any politician advocating the burial of PCB should be defeated for re-election.

F.M. ELLIS

Pittsboro

"N+O" 9/24/79

PCB-ARCH-EXT0378548