



Toxic Materials News

Weekly business newsletter published from the Nation's Capital

Publisher: LEONARD A. EISERER

Editor: TOM QUAY

Vol. 9 No. 18

May 12, 1982

Page 145

- Obey To Investigate Alleged NCI/CMA Attempt To Stop IARC Benzene Risk Assessment Page 146
- Cornuch Moves To Dispel Notion That EPA Is Weak on Enforcement Page 146
- FIFRA Reauthorization Passes Agriculture Committee, State Data Requests Limited Page 147
- Chamber and Clean Air Group Exchange Jobs Over Hazardous Air Pollutant Study Page 148
- Did EPA Already Win? Lawyers Ask Judge for Clarification of MCB Case Page 149

SLANTS & TRENDS

ARE PCBs REALLY A HEALTH RISK? That's the question being posed today at a seminar held by Environmental Protection Agency due to a new study by the electric utility industry that claims PCBs might not be as dangerous as once believed. That claim is backed up by Monsanto Co., which released a review of PCB health effects as TSN goes to press. Monsanto claims that there is "no link with human cancer" and that PCBs are not "deadly toxins."

GOVERNMENT SCIENTISTS seem to be taking the study cautiously and one pointed out that there has never been solid information that PCBs cause cancer in humans or just how dangerous they really are. If it turns out that PCBs are not the threat once believed, EPA cannot be blamed for jumping the gun and overregulating at its own discretion. Remember, Congress demanded that the "mad dog of the environment" be removed.

DESPITE THE NEW STUDY ON PCBs, one industry spokesman told TSN that chemical industry is not giving the fire retardant a clean bill of health. There are still problems with the chemical that cause them concern. Spokesman said that there are no plans to bring PCBs back on the market, but that federal regulations should be reflective of the latest evidence on toxicity and hazard.

IF AT FIRST YOU DON'T SUCCEED... A third reorganization of EPA's enforcement office is looming on the horizon and details could be available on the latest changes this week, agency staff told TSN. The new lawship chiefs have asked staff attorneys in Office of Enforcement Counsel to submit a list of which environmental laws they are experienced with and to list other projects that they would not mind working on. EPA staff said they believe that Bob Perry, head of the enforcement program, is considering shuffling attorneys around the various OEC divisions.

MQNS 011508

FACED WITH A DETERIORATING ENVIRONMENTAL IMAGE, EPA head Anne Gorsuch is taking steps to improve the agency's public image. She has hired a public relations consultant, Donald Ferguson of Entercom, Inc., Denver Colo., to help out. With all the problems the economy is slated to cause for the GOP this November, sources say that the agency is under pressure from the White House to stay out of the press, unless there is something positive to say. Supposedly, Ferguson will be able to reverse the flood of critical reports on EPA's poor staff morale, lack of enforcement and seemingly weak commitment to environmental protection. Let's see.

Toxic Materials News (ISSN 0093-6081) published weekly. Subscription rates: \$267 per year, \$130 for six months. U.S., Canada, and Mexico subscribers add \$10.00 per year first class postage. Subscribers in all other countries add \$45 per year air mail postage. Reproduction in any form prohibited without express permission from the publisher. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Business Publishers, Inc., 951 Pershing Drive, Silver Spring, MD 20910, (301) 567-6300.