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ACOP Wants County License

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Issuance of occupational licenses as a pollution enforcement measure will be recommended to the Escambia County Commission Thursday.

The Commission's Advisory Committee on Pollution (ACOP) agreed by a 4-1 vote Wednesday night to ask the commission to consider requiring "the issuance of an occupational license to any person or entity doing business within the jurisdictional limits of Escambia County . . ."

Committee member Frank Westmark voted against the motion.

Westmark suggested that the word pollution should not be in the ordinance request. He said he was concerned that small businesses could be harassed by the ordinance.

The legal sub-committee of ACOP drafted the proposal and pointed out that probably "the most effective device obtainable to the county to enforce pollution laws would be the right, without extensive legal proceedings to deny, suspend or revoke any person's or entity's right to carry on an occupation within Escambia County . . ."

Attorney Larry H. Hipsh, subcommittee chairman, said that the sole purpose of the ordinance would be to force the licensee to abide by the pollution laws of Escambia County and the state and federal governments.

The sub-committee also recommended that the commission direct the county attorney to prepare a draft of the proposed ordinance and submit it to the ACOP for study.

The other two members of the legal sub-committee are ACOP member W. H. F. Wiltshire and attorney Rod Magie.

ACOP member Dr. Thomas S. Hopkins said he would like to see "the word pollution (in the ordinance) be enlarged to cover environmental deterioration."

He explained that there are two kinds of pollution being considered, air and water. But there is also aesthetic pollution. "I think businesses should maintain an aesthetic environment and clean up some of the unsightliness," he said.

In other action the committee asked Hopkins to conduct a study to determine the source of PCB (a chemical with properties similar to DDT) in area water.

The move was prompted by a recent television program during which Monsanto was accused of putting PCB into the water.

Hopkins said Monsanto has never dumped PCB, and that PCB is an expensive, heat-insulating fluid used in air conditioning systems.

He said the only PCB introduced into the water by Monsanto was during a short period when their air conditioning system developed a leak.

"I am sure that the situation has been corrected," he said. "In fact the company has replaced PCB with a harmless fluid, just in event another leak develops in the system."

He said several other sources could be responsible for PCB in area water, including fiber glass pleasure boats, but that he knows of no studies being made in that direction.

"It's the only common denominator I have come up with," he said.