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For your information.
Lon P. MacFarland

PCB Traces Located in River After Sequoyah Spill

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn. — TVA tests turned up PCB traces in the Tennessee River yesterday after a transformer at Sequoyah nuclear power plant ruptured and spilled 58 gallons of the toxic chemical.

TVA officials said yesterday they believed the PCBs posed no health hazards. Long-term exposure to PCB is suspected to cause cancer, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

THE PCB traces were found at three places downstream from the plant and at the plant's discharge point. The largest amount — 6.4 micrograms — turned up at Tennessee-American Water Co. near downtown Chattanooga about 19 miles from the plant, TVA officials said.

"We don't think it's hazardous," said Ian McLeod, a TVA spokesman. "A gram is something like a fingernail clipping and you're talking about six millionths of that."

The transformer short-circuited and ruptured last Tuesday. TVA first believed all PCB liquid either had been cleaned up or was contained within the building, officials said.

BUT THE utility later discovered that some may have flowed through a drain sump to a pond that eventually flows into the Tennessee River.

Officials said they took river samples as a precaution Friday. Jim Morris, the utility's water quality branch chief, said yesterday the results were inconclusive and more tests were being conducted.

Morris said he believes the river should have diluted the PCBs before they reached the Tennessee-American Water Co. He said first test results could be off because of problems during sampling or testing or because of PCB releases elsewhere along the river.

PCB is used as an insulating liquid at power transformers along with oil because it is less flammable than oil.