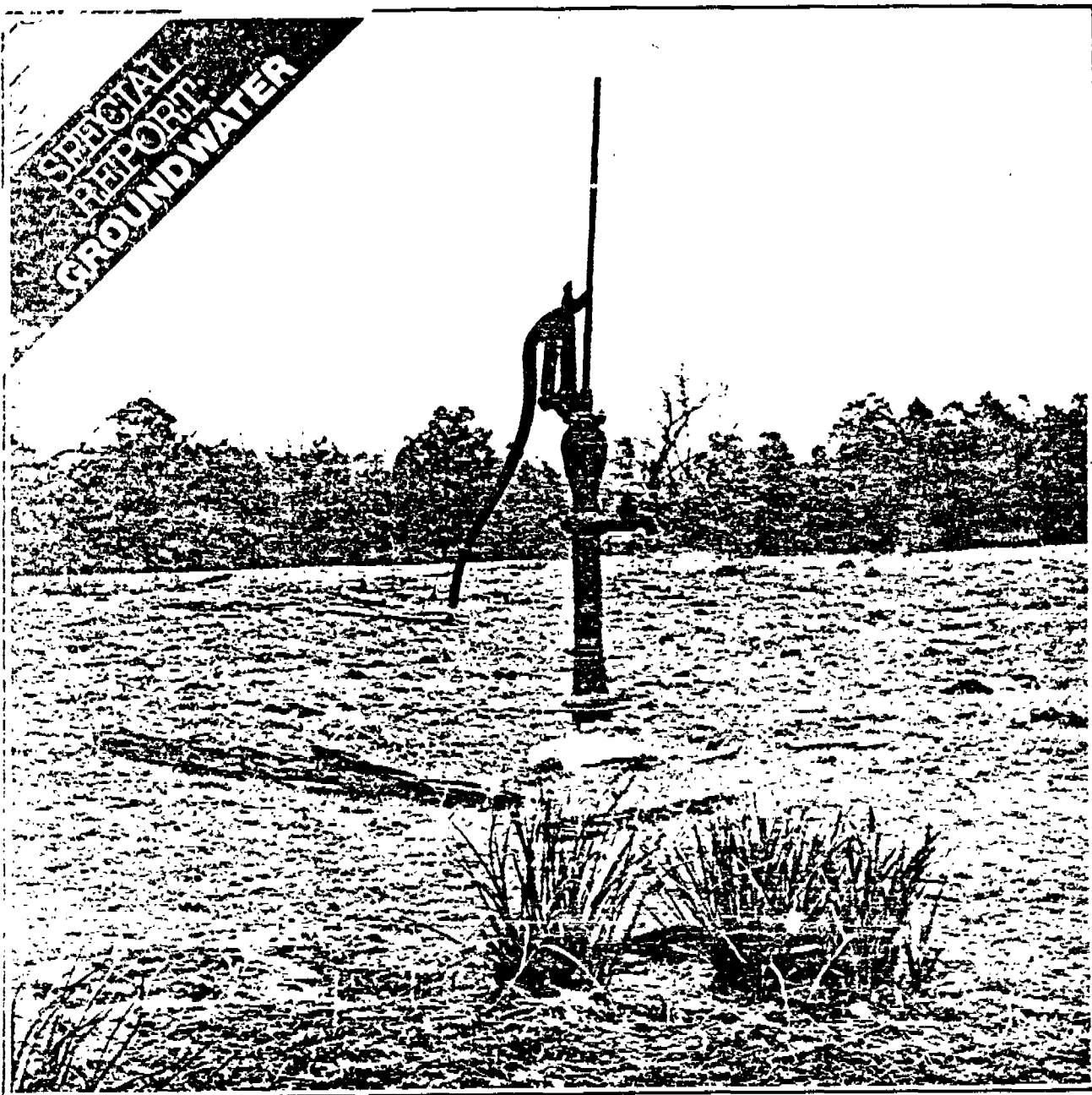


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CHEMICOLOGY

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EPA Proposes 'Bubble' Rules

that change to national air quality regulations that will help reduce the regulatory burden on industry. The proposal was proposed by the Environmental Protection Agency.

The change, dealing with how EPA defines a pollution "source," will remove the red tape binding new industrial development while continuing to protect public health against air pollution. EPA Acting Administrator Douglas M. Costle said.

The change concerns EPA's definition of new sources of pollution that do not meet the national air quality stan-

dards. The Air Act forbids any new construction of a "major source" in areas that do not have an EPA-approved plan needed to meet Federal air quality standards. It forbids any "modification" of a major source that would increase emissions "significantly."

Facilities that do have a plan to meet standards, but have not yet met them, are allowed to construct or modify provided that the increase does not require a construction permit. Certain other pollution exemptions.

The burdens imposed by these requirements depend largely on how EPA defines a "source." If the entire plant is taken as the "source," its owners could increase pollution from one part of the plant, as long as they decreased emissions in another part of the plant. Since on balance pollution from the plant as a whole would not have increased there would have been no modification under the statute and formal preconstruction review would not be required. This "bubble" approach, which considers total emissions from a plant, not individual pollution sources emissions, is supported by CMA.

However, if EPA views each individual facility within that plant as a "source," then the owners must meet the regulatory requirements for each facility whenever its emissions increase beyond a certain amount, even if total plant-wide emissions do not increase as a whole and significantly delay or curtail any industrial expansion.

At present EPA applies the second definition in areas that are not meeting air quality standards. Today's proposal would adopt the first approach in-

stead. Under it, only the plant as a whole is considered a "source."

EPA also is proposing to drop its requirement that any existing plant that is being substantially rebuilt in an area that does not meet air quality standards must get a permit even if its total pollution does not increase significantly.

The proposal was published March 12 in the Federal Register.

EPA Develops Air Monitors

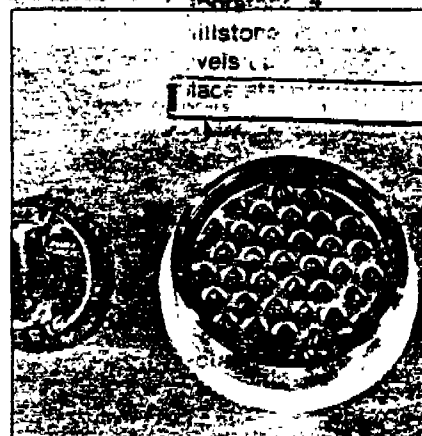
The fresh air we breathe may not always be as pure as we like to think it is.

To learn more about individual exposures to potentially harmful toxic organic pollutants in the ambient air, the Environmental Protection Agency is funding development of badge-type personal monitors.

"We hope to make these badges sensitive enough to measure parts-per-billion concentrations of toxic pollutants," EPA project officer James Milik explained.

The badge-type monitors, the same size as radiation detector badges, will contain sorbent materials to collect toxic compounds from air. Substances that can be detected by the badges are vinyl chloride, trichloroethylene, tetrachloroethylene, dichlorobenzene, 1, 2-dichloroethane and trichloroethane.

This prototype personal monitoring badge is being developed for EPA by the Monsanto Research Corporation.



EPA Releases Benzene Research

A report submitted to the agencies showed that benzene had no effect on reproductive performance in laboratory animals.

The research, administered by CMAA, American Petroleum Institute, was conducted by an independent contractor, Biodynamics, Inc., of East Brunswick, N.J., and covered inhalation exposure up to 30 times the present work standard.

Male and female rats were exposed to benzene at one to 300 times the present standard for six hours a day, five days a week during a ten-week period prior to mating with untreated rats. Female rats continued to be exposed during the mating and gestation periods and from days five to 21 of pregnancy. No statistically significant

adverse effects on reproduction or on the offspring were observed in any of the tests.

Testicular changes were observed in two out of 20 male rats at the highest dose level, but this did not appear to affect reproductive performance. It is not clear if these changes were related to benzene exposure.

The reports were submitted to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Food and Drug Administration, the National Cancer Institute, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and the National Institute of Environmental Health Science.