

Meeting planned on PCB burning

By TOM WILK
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WOODBURY — High-level members from the state and federal government's environmental agencies will meet with local leaders to discuss the proposed test burning of PCBs at the Rollins Environmental Services Inc. facility in Logan Township.

U.S. Rep. James J. Florio, D-1st Dist., and Assemblyman Kenneth A. Gewertz, D-4, said they would request Chris Beck, a regional director with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and Daniel O'Hern, director of the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), to attend the meeting.

The announcement was made Saturday morning during a 30-minute meeting at the Gloucester County Courthouse here with the mayors of Swedesboro and Logan, Woolwich and Greenwich townships. Other persons at the meeting included Logan Township Solicitor Kenneth A. DiMuzio and the Rev. James Davis, a Bridgeport minister instrumental in arranging Saturday's meeting.

"The meeting will take place before the proposed burn takes place," Florio said, noting that it probably will come within the next month. "Before they make a decision on a burn, the people are entitled to some answers," he added.

Gewertz said state officials should be as concerned with protecting the people around Rollins as they are in preserving the Pinelands.

Saturday's session centered around the appropriateness of using Rollins as a disposal site for the polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), a potential cancer-causing agent.

"We should require state and federal officials to provide answers as to the appropriateness of Rollins," said Joseph Musumeci, the mayor of Swedesboro.

Greenwich Township Mayor Dominic Merino expressed concern since PCBs would have to be transported through the township if they are to be burned at Rollins.

In a report submitted to the Gloucester County Board of Freeholders and the Solid Waste Advisory Council, Logan Solicitor DiMuzio enumerated 20 environmental considerations in an argument to exclude Rollins from being included in a proposed solid waste management plan for Gloucester County.

The solicitor cited the potential danger to residents of Logan and Woolwich townships as well as the possible damage to agriculture, aquifers and floodplains in the area. He also pointed out that both towns are growing, and that Rollins could adversely affect the economic growth of the area.

After the meeting, DiMuzio said the PCB question is now a "moral issue."

"The moral issue is whether the federal government can impose upon Logan Township and Gloucester County an unreasonable risk of harm associated with the hazardous waste facility located here," he explained.

DiMuzio said the federal government hasn't analyzed the Rollins site to determine whether it is adequate for burning PCBs. He noted the federal government banned PCBs in August 1978 and decided they must be disposed of by incineration.

"However, they didn't establish the selection site criteria on where to locate an incineration facility," DiMuzio explained.

In a related matter, both the Gloucester County Mayors Association

and leaders of the Beckett housing development have gone on record opposing the test burn of PCBs at Rollins.

The association voted against the test burn during their meeting Friday night at the Tall Pines Inn in Deptford Township.

Beckett, the owners and developers of 7,000 acres of land in Logan and Woolwich townships, are opposed to the test burn because of the potential effects on the local population and "the inherent dangers to an even more widespread population base."

Both Beckett and the Pureland Industrial Complex announced their opposition in a letter sent to the DEP.

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