U.S. Steel Accepts Oct. 31, 1975, Deadline On Chicago Pollution

Suit Settled With Agreement To Eliminate Lake Michigan Discharge From South Works

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By a WALL STREET JOURNAL Staff Reporter

CHICAGO — U.S. Steel Corp., said it had agreed to eliminate all discharge of wastes into Lake Michigan from its South Works plant here by Oct. 31, 1975.

The agreement, approved by Circuit Court Judge Walter P. Dahl, terminates a suit filed against the nation's largest steel producer by Illinois' Atrorney General, William J. Scott, and the Chicago Metropolitan Sanitary District in September 1969.

According to Edward C. Logelin, vice president, Midwest, U.S. Steel filed a counterclaim to seek the impartial judgment of the court. "We wanted to determine what standards we should meet and be able to make the necessary business judgments," Mr. Logelin said. "This objective has now been reached."

According to the court order, U.S. Steel has agreed to meet certain deadlines for eliminating waste discharges and constructing closed-cycle systems. Using advanced recycling systems, process water used for various cleaning operations in the mills will be cooled and treated so it can be reused in the plant. If U.S. Steel abides by the agreement, 95% of the wastes from the blast furnaces and other mill operations will be contained within the plant, and according to the attorney general, "not one drop of waste water will go into Lake Michigan." State officials estimated plant conversion costs at $8 million to $12 milllion; U.S. Steel declined to make an estimate.

The 89-year-old South Works facility can discharge up to 100 million gallons of waste water a day, according to the attorney general's office. Under existing state water quality standards, this amount of discharge could contain 20 pounds of cyanide, 170 pounds of phenol and 2,100 pounds of ammonia, in addition to 21,000 pounds of suspended solids and 12,600 pounds of oils. Under the agreement, all cyanide, phenol and ammonia wastes will be eliminated and suspended solids and oil wastes will be reduced to manageable residues of about 800 and 400 pounds, respectively. These residues will be treated by the Chicago Metropolitan Sanitary District.

"This is the most important order in the nation to date in the legal battle against pollution," Attorney General Scott said.

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