help," according to the policy. "Failure to meet these standards would inhibit economic growth and in some cases make it difficult to retain existing businesses," it added.

EPA is modifying its offset policy to allow states to store emission reduction credits, a move officials think will help alleviate that difficulty, the urban policy says (see related story, p. 1859).

Resource Recovery

The Carter Administration also is proposing $15 million in grants, to be provided by EPA, for the planning of resource recovery systems in 15 to 30 cities.

"Grants of $300 to $400 thousand 'seed money' will fund feasibility and design studies," the policy says.

"The funds can ultimately stimulate up to $750 million of private investment and provide useful models for other cities."

Cities will not be allowed to use the funds for the design or construction of systems to recover energy and materials from waste, the policy stipulates.

Wastewater Facilities

The policy calls upon EPA to do the following, with regard to wastewater facilities:

- Strengthen the role of regional agencies in dealing with city and suburban wastewater needs;
- De-emphasize funding for new and excess wastewater facilities;
- Limit state collector sewer and drinking water prospects to five percent of funds;
- Revise the matching grant program, with federal and state agencies providing 95 percent of the cost of wastewater facilities;
- Coordinate planning of wastewater treatment through a single regional agency; and
- Develop closer links between areawide wastewater treatment planning grants and other federally assisted planning programs.

The main objectives of the national urban policy, as related to environmental controls, are to provide technical planning assistance to "distressed city centers" and to reduce the disincentives which keep businesses from locating in those areas.

EPA's Urban Work Group

EPA officials are taking additional steps to maximize the agency's involvement in identifying solutions to problems in urban areas.

One such example is the formation of an EPA urban work group, whose "mission" is to assist the Administration in carrying out its policy initiatives.

The group will develop an urban strategy for EPA, inform the EPA administrators of current urban environmental issues, establish an urban environmental reference file, and develop a checklist for officials to use when drafting regulations.

The checklist will take into account urban implications of proposed regulations. Additionally, the group will conduct a semi-annual review of urban-related efforts undertaken by the agency.

Water Pollution

SUITS SEEK RESOLUTION ON LAKE MICHIGAN PCB REMOVAL

The Environmental Protection Agency and Outboard Marine Corporation, a Waukegan, Ill., manufacturer of outboard motors, have turned to the courts for a determination on what action should be taken to remedy polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) pollution in Lake Michigan.

EPA March 17 sued Outboard Marine, alleging the company violated the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899, and common law of nuisance. Outboard Marine, the agency said, failed to disclose it had unlawfully discharged thousands of pounds of PCBs into Waukegan Harbor.

EPA's suit, filed in the District Court for the Northern District of Illinois, seeks removal of the PCBs in an "environmentally acceptable manner." It seeks penalties of up to $20 million.

Outboard Marine acknowledges that it discharged PCBs into Waukegan Harbor, although the company does not agree with EPA's estimates that up to two million pounds of the toxic substance are trapped in harbor sediments.

And the company is suing EPA.

Company Sues EPA

Outboard Marine March 1 sued the agency in the District Court for the Northern District of Illinois. The company's suit seeks federal aid and research assistance to determine whether and how the PCBs should be removed.

Both suits come after nearly two years of administrative proceedings involving EPA and Outboard Marine. The final question which the court may have to answer is not whether the company unlawfully discharged PCBs, but rather whether sediments heavily contaminated with toxic materials should be removed. If so, how?

The question put before the court by Outboard Marine — whether sediment containing toxic materials should be dredged — is still being debated in Virginia where thousands of pounds of Kepone are resting in James River sediments.

According to EPA enforcement officials in Washington, resolution of the Kepone dilemma is still far away. Environmentalists and government officials alike are unsure whether dredging James River spoils to remove the Kepone will cause more damage to the downstream Chesapeake Bay than would just leaving the pesticide where it is.

The situation in Waukegan Harbor is somewhat similar to the Kepone contamination in the James River. The PCBs are stored in sediments, the result of years of leakage from hydraulic lines in Outboard Marine's production facility. According to Hugh Thomas, the firm's corporate counsel, the court must compel EPA to decide whether the spoils should be removed. Action by the agency or the firm, however, could bring objections from local environmentalists.

Discharge Uncontested

Thomas said his firm is not contesting EPA allegations charging Outboard Marine with unlawful discharge of PCBs.

The firm in the early 1960s through 1971 used a hydraulic fluid supplied by Monsanto Corporation to fill lines for its die casting machines. Normal leakage from the hydraulic lines sometimes was caught by sawdust distributed around machinery, Thomas said, but some of the fluid did leak into a company holding lagoon and Waukegan Harbor.

Thomas said that during the period through 1971, Outboard Marine did not know the hydraulic fluid contained PCBs. The fluid met the company's heat specifications, and Monsanto declined to supply the firm with a component breakdown, he said. Thomas said Monsanto claimed the information was proprietary.

In late 1971, Monsanto supplied Outboard Marine with a new hydraulic fluid, the one now in use at Outboard Marine's plant. The firm, under a 1976 EPA order, replaced all of the hydraulic lines that were contaminated by PCBs to prevent continued leakage into Waukegan Harbor.

MONS 000710

Corporate Responsibility

According to James O. McDonald, director of EPA's Region V enforcement office, the agency's enforcement action is intended to force Outboard Marine to develop a plan for removing the PCBs from harbor sediments. The company in 1976 hired a consultant to analyze the sediment contamination, but proposals have not been submitted to the agency for removing the PCBs.

McDonald said he believes it is the company's obligation to develop a removal plan. "Here, we have in place toxics just sitting there. We have a known source. We should have firm proposals from the discharger," McDonald said.

Outboard Marine, however, disagrees with McDonald. Thomas said the company has done its preliminary research, but the firm lacks the expertise to develop a sound removal program — if indeed the PCBs should be removed.

"A lot of environmentalists are against dredging," Thomas said. "We felt the responsibility should be with the agency to decide" whether and how the PCBs should be removed.

McDonald said EPA intends to provide Outboard Marine with technical oversight, but "there's a high degree of responsibility on the part of the discharger" to develop plans for resolving environmental contamination.

The agency will determine if removal plans advanced by Outboard Marine are environmentally sound, McDonald said. He added, however, that it is not the Government's job "to sit down with a healthy company and work out a research plan."

Atomic Energy

SCIENCE PANEL LINKS FEW HAZARDS TO HANFORD NUCLEAR WASTE FACILITY

Radioactive wastes from military plutonium production at the Hanford Reservation in Washington pose no significant hazard either to workers there or to the population surrounding the controversial facility, according to a National Academy of Sciences study.

An NAS National Research Council panel concluded, after a year of study and technical review of Hanford waste management operations, that even a "maximum credible" leak of nearly 800,000 gallons of high-level liquid wastes would not pose a serious radiation threat to the surrounding population. The report was released March 24.

"The external radiation hazard from Hanford wastes is very small, to either operating personnel or the public, because the wastes are shielded and confined," the report says.

The study, commissioned in 1975 by the Energy Research and Development Administration, focuses on the current practices and future plans for handling radioactive wastes accumulated during more than 30 years of plutonium production at Hanford.

Operations and management practices at the facility, located near the junctions of the Snake, Yakima, and Columbia rivers in southeastern Washington, have played a key part in criticisms of nuclear waste management in the U.S. and in long-term radiation research.

Interim Measures Justified

The report acknowledges the criticism — much of it aimed at the leakage, over the facility's 33-year life, of 450,000 gallons of high-level liquid wastes — but says that "over the short term" management of high-level wastes at Hanford "has been adequate."

While Hanford management can be criticized for focusing on interim measures instead of permanent waste isolation, the report says, many of the actions "that now seem inappropriate may have been justified" by crisis situations at the time.

"Most of the work at Hanford was done at a time when rapid production of plutonium seemed urgent, and the wastes were a separate problem that could be postponed," the report says.

"Management was complex, involving interactions among government agencies and contractors whose identity changed from time to time; directives from five national administrations, their [Atomic Energy Commission] commissioners, and Congress changed frequently. Under such circumstances, it would have been surprising had no mistakes been made," it says.

Among the interim solutions that "have complicated the problems of waste disposal," the report cites:

- Neutralization of original acid waste, increasing its volume and chemical complexity;
- Using corrosible carbon-steel tank liners led to leaks and dispersal of high-level wastes into surrounding sediments;
- Evaporating liquid waste resulted in a complex assortment of solids and concentrated alkaline liquors that will be difficult to remove from tanks;
- Encapsulating strontium and cesium salts is producing "heat sources whose disposal will be troublesome"; and
- Releasing plutonium-bearing solutions to the ground has led to local relatively large accumulations beneath 100-foot-long under-ground trenches.

The report, however, says that the radiation hazards from Hanford's wastes "are below permissible limits."

Worker, General Population Risks

For the population within 50 miles of Hanford the average per capita annual radiation dose rate is 0.01 mrem, it says.

For Hanford workers between 1965 and 1975, the report says, the 5,000 mrem per year permissible occupational limit set by the National Council on Radiation Protection was exceeded only in 1968 and 1969. Except for those two years, the maximum exposures to any individual reported between 1965 and 1975 ranged between 4,400 mrem/yr and 8,400 mrem/yr, the report says.

"Radiation exposure of Hanford works is kept low by shielding, by modifying equipment and procedures to reduce both radiation intensities and time required for jobs, and by storing gamma-ray sources well away from areas of frequent occupancy," the report says.

The report mentions the controversial analysis of Hanford worker mortality in which University of Pittsburgh researcher Thomas F. Mancuso suggested a link between radiation exposure and cancer among Hanford workers.

It also notes later research on the Mancuso data in which a different statistical method was employed "based on mortality corrected for both age and calendar year." In that research, it says, the Mancuso results were not confirmed.

More statistical analyses of the Hanford data "will be required to resolve these different interpretations of the same body of data," the report says.

It says, however, that "the off-reservation intensity of radiation caused by Hanford operations is no more than a trivial fraction of the natural background radiation." Monitoring of all parts of the environment is adequate, it says, and "provision has been made for prompt remedial action in case of credible accidents or natural calamities."

No Hazard From 800,000 Gallon Leak

In reviewing the largest leak of high-level wastes — 115,000 gallons that went unnoticed for several weeks — the

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MONS 000711