

Plastic Ban Poses Job Loss Threat

WASHINGTON — The American plastics industry warned that proposed government rules to slash vinyl chloride levels in factories to minimize the danger of cancer could cost the nation up to 2.2 million jobs and \$90 billion in annual production.

Anton Vittone, president of B.F. Goddard Chemical Co. and an official of the Society of the Plastics Industry, said the proposed health rules could virtually shut down his industry.

Vittone appeared at a public hearing with scores of other industry representatives to oppose implementation of new regulations, which would limit factory air levels of vinyl chloride to less than one part per million — so small as to be undetectable.

In recent months, vinyl chloride — a key chemical in the manufacture of many plastics — has been linked to a rare form of cancer called angiosarcoma of the liver. The evidence has been rapidly accumulating.

Within the past two weeks, testified Dr. Marcus M. Key of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, "We have identified two deaths from angiosarcoma of the liver in men employed at plants utilizing polyvinyl chloride to fabricate other products."

Key said seven cases have been reported at a B.F. Goddard plant in Kentucky, three cases at a Goodyear plant in New York, two cases in a Union Carbide plant in West Virginia and one case in a Firestone plant in Pennsylvania. Of the thirteen reported cancer cases linked to vinyl chloride, only three

victims remain alive, he said.

In addition, experimental studies conducted by Industrial Bio-Test Laboratories of Northbrook, Ill., and by Prof. Cesare Maltoni of Bologna, Italy, have strengthened the belief that vinyl chloride causes cancer.

In a just released telegram to John Stender, head of the Occupational Safety Health Administration in the Department of Labor, Maltoni reported that vinyl chloride produced "zymbal gland carcinomas, nephroblastomas, angiosarcomas of liver and other sites, skin sarcomas and probably hepatomas and neuroblastomas" in rats.

In another experiment, Maltoni said, more than 60 mice were exposed to 50 parts - per - million of vinyl chloride for seven months.

After 49 weeks of dosage, he said, "we have observed nine mammary carcinomas, two liver fibro - angiomas, and two subcutaneous angiomas."

Based on the Maltoni and Bio-Test Laboratory experiments, plus the known cases of liver cancers in humans exposed to vinyl chloride, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration concluded that "our present judgment is that vinyl chloride is a carcinogenic agent."

In April, the agency issued an emergency standard limiting vinyl chloride air levels to 50 parts - per - million — the same daily dosage administered to Maltoni's mice. Now the agency proposes to reduce allowable vinyl chloride air levels to less than one part per million, the so-called "no detectable level" standard.

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