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EDITORIALS

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File Commerce

The EPA Tests The Waters

I hesitate to look a gift horse in the mouth, but I find it astonishing that Anne Weinert of the Environmental Protection Agency's Region V office saw fit to notify eight chemical and two sewage treatment companies of the EPA'S intent to test their discharge sites along the Mississippi River.

Does Weinert truly believe that major polluters like Monsanto and Pfizer will not "try to shut down or change their discharge"? Ms. Weinert, I have a 3-year-old niece who, if forewarned, would gladly make off with the cookie rather than be caught with her hand in the jar. Of course, these companies have been "very cooperative." They're jumping for joy because they get a chance to (and I use the phrase loosely) clean up their act.

LETTERS FROM THE PEOPLE

I also find it not in the least bit coincidental that this EPA investigation comes on the heels of a comprehensive scientific study done by Greenpeace that determined that the St. Louis area between 1968 and 1983 had the highest death rate along the Mississippi River. It is through the efforts of organizations like Greenpeace and our own local Coalition for the Environment that the environmental conscience is being raised.

It will be very interesting to see how the EPA's scheduled test results compare to Greenpeace's "pop-quiz" test results.

Erica Marie Cook
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Imagine being told by the Internal Revenue Service that your 1988 tax return will be audited. Wouldn't you make extra sure that every item, down to the last penny, was correct before you submitted it? Or suppose you learned that you'd die in the near future. Wouldn't you make sure your life insurance was paid, lest your dependents be left impecunious?

Now imagine you are an official with a large chemical company that routinely dumps effluents into the Mississippi River. If you were told by the Environmental Protection Agency that your plant's discharges would be monitored for five consecutive days, wouldn't you make sure — at least for those five days — that your wastes were within legal limits?

I'll bet the eight local companies and the two area sewage treatment facilities currently under EPA scrutiny will, too.

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