

Environmental News

A compilation of news releases, advisories to the press and other timely information

For further details, contact **202/382-4355**.

EPA AND REGISTRANTS IN DINOSEB HEARING REACH CANCELLATION SETTLEMENT

EPA and the remaining registrants in the dinoseb pesticide cancellation hearing proceedings, Cedar Chemical Corp. and Drexel Chemical Co., have reached a settlement which is expected to result in final cancellation of all remaining dinoseb registrations. EPA and the registrants have submitted a joint motion to the Administrative Law Judge requesting that the settlement be implemented and that the cancellation hearing be terminated. The settlement includes provisions that will permit temporary use under stringent restrictions of remaining stocks of certain dinoseb products on certain crops in certain states.

Al Heier
202-382-4374

Under EPA regulations, other parties in the proceeding will have 10 days to respond to the motion, and the Administrative Law Judge will then reach a decision on implementation of the settlement agreement and submit that decision to the EPA Administrator for final determination. The Administrator has up to 90 days to issue a final order in the case.

Under provisions of the settlement, EPA would permit existing stocks of cancelled dinoseb to be distributed, sold and used: 1) for weed control in dry peas, lentils, chickpeas and green peas in the states of Washington, Idaho and Oregon during the 1988 use season; and 2) for vegetative cane control in caneberries (blackberries, boysenberries, loganberries and raspberries) in the states of Washington and Oregon during the 1988 and 1989 use seasons. Distribution, sale and use of dinoseb will only be authorized for a particular crop in a particular state if its state department of agriculture expressly requests such authorization and agrees to enforce the restrictions the final order would impose. The proposed restrictions included in the proposed cancellation order are stringent and detailed to minimize the exposure and risk associated

with any further dinoseb use. EPA estimates that up to 285,000 gallons of existing stocks may be utilized under these provisions. Over two million gallons of other remaining stocks of dinoseb, labeled primarily for use on peanuts and soybeans, have been reported to EPA by registrants and dealers. The settlement agreement includes provisions intended to establish the amount of indemnification that the registrants are entitled to receive under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA). In the settlement agreement, EPA also agrees to accept eligible dinoseb products for federal disposal under FIFRA as soon as practicable, but no later than Dec. 31, 1988. However, EPA will only be able to meet this deadline if it receives adequate funding for this purpose.

EPA issued a notice of intent to cancel the dinoseb registration and an emergency order immediately suspending all further distribution, sale and use of pesticide products containing dinoseb in October 1986. These actions were based on the agency's determination that continued use of dinoseb products would pose an unacceptable risk of birth defects, male reproductive effects and acute toxicity for pesticide applicators and agricultural workers. Emergency suspension of the sale, distribution and use of pesticide products is the most stringent action available to EPA under FIFRA and has been exercised on only three previous occasions. The notice of intent to cancel dinoseb was challenged by Drexel and Cedar and acceptance of this agreement by the Administrator will end the cancellation proceedings.

MEYERS, LONG AND GUIMOND NAMED TO NEW POSITIONS

The EPA Administrator has selected Sheldon Meyers as the new Acting Associate Administrator for International Activities. Meyers who has served as Director of EPA's Office of Radiation Programs since 1984 is replacing Bill Long who is reassigned as the Director of the Environmental Directorate, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development in Paris. To replace Meyers, Craig Potter, Assistant Administrator for Air and Radiation, has selected Richard Guimond, a U.S. Public Health Service officer and career EPA employee. Guimond has headed the agency's radon program since its inception in 1985.

Christian Rice
202-382-3324

DELONGHI CONSENT AGREEMENT FILED

A consent agreement between EPA and DeLonghi America Inc. was filed with the Chief Judicial Officer on Dec. 21. The agency filed a \$1.5 million complaint against the company in 1986, alleging illegal importation and subsequent export of a number of PCB-contaminated oil-filled radiator heaters. The consent agreement requires payment of a \$520,000 civil penalty. The agreement also requires the establishment of a \$200,000 "starter fund" for handling return, replacement and disposal of contaminated heaters, testing and certification of all heaters entering the U.S. and a consumer awareness program.

Alicia Tenuta
202-382-4132

MIDWEST DEVELOPERS PENALIZED FOR WETLANDS DESTRUCTION

In the first use of administrative penalties for wetlands violations under the Clean Water Act, EPA Region 5 in Chicago has proposed administrative penalties against two developers in Illinois and one in Minnesota for destroying separate wetland areas. Administrative penalties were first authorized by Congress in the 1987 Amendments to the Clean Water Act and allow EPA to bypass the court system and penalize companies directly. The three developers and communities in which the violations took place are Kirk Corporation, Streamwood, Ill; Hoffman Group, Hoffman Estates, Ill.; and Woodland Development Corp. Andover, Minn. Kirk allegedly filled in one acre of an 18-acre wetland site and is being assessed with a proposed penalty of \$15,000. Woodland allegedly filled in 22 acres to develop a golf course and housing project and may be required to pay \$75,000. Hoffman allegedly filled in six acres and may pay a \$125,000 penalty. The developers have 20 days to respond to the complaints.

Dave Ryan
202-382-2981

MERCEDES-BENZ PENALIZED FOR CLEAN AIR VIOLATIONS

Mercedes-Benz of North America Inc. and Daimler-Benz Aktiengesellschaft have agreed to pay a \$148,000 civil penalty to settle alleged violations of the Clean Air Act reporting requirements. The alleged violations include failure to describe an emission-related part in the application for certification and failure to update the application. The agency said the auto manufacturer also failed to report changes to parts on its vehicles and to report an emission-related defect as well as numerous maintenance tests on certification test vehicles. The alleged violations occurred during the 1981 through 1986 model years. EPA relies, in part, on infor-

Martha Casey
202-382-4378

mation submitted by automobile manufacturers to determine whether their motor vehicles comply with the emission standards. As part of the settlement, Mercedes-Benz also agreed to devise and implement compliance and employee education programs to prevent similar situations from occurring.

EPA EXECUTIVES RECEIVE PRESIDENTIAL RANK AWARDS

Three EPA executives were among those career government officials whose accomplishments were recognized by the 1987 Presidential Rank Awards. Michael B. Cook, Director of the Office of Drinking Water in the Office of Water, has reoriented the drinking water program under the far-reaching Safe Drinking Water Amendments of 1986; worked intensively with congressional staff on the Hazardous and Solid Waste Act of 1984 to improve the workability and practicality of the amendments; and established EPA policies, priorities, and mechanisms to cope with these new requirements.

Dave Ryan
202-382-2981

Rebecca W. Hanmer, Deputy Assistant Administrator for Water, has been instrumental in recognizing the expense and complexity of regulating toxic entering the nation's waters and encouraging use of more reliable, less expensive, biomonitoring techniques; in negotiating with Congress as it reauthorized the Clean Water Act; and in implementing the pretreatment program for toxic control.

Alexandra B. Smith, Deputy Regional Administrator for EPA Region 8, has played the lead role in revamping and clarifying the relationships between headquarters and regional offices for the pesticides and toxic programs. From 1975-79, she helped negotiate environmentally acceptable agreements with the firms that developed and built the Alaskan oil pipelines. From 1979-84, she served as deputy and then director of the air and waste management division for Region 10 in Seattle.

NEW REGULATORY PRIORITY LIST FOR DRINKING WATER CONTAMINANTS ANNOUNCED

EPA has announced a final action establishing a new regulatory priority list of 53 drinking water contaminants. EPA must regulate at least 25 contaminants from this list within three years, as required by the June 1986 Amendments to the Safe Drinking Water Act. In

Dave Ryan
202-382-2981

addition, a new priority list must be published every three years, and EPA must regulate a minimum of 53 contaminants from each new list every three years. This list is in addition to an earlier regulatory priority list--also required by the 1986 Amendments--of 83 specified contaminants that must all be regulated by June 1989 (The list of 83 includes 34 final standards already set by EPA since the drinking water regulatory program began in 1975). Today's announced action also removes seven unregulated drinking water contaminants from the priority list of 83 and substitutes seven others in their place, as allowed by Congress in the 1986 Amendments. Congress requires, however, that regulation of any substitute contaminants has to be more protective of public health than would be regulation of the contaminants removed from the list. The seven contaminants EPA is removing from the list are molybdenum, vanadium, dibromomethane, sodium, zinc, silver and aluminum. The seven substituted are nitrite, heptachlor, heptachlor epoxide, ethylbenzene, styrene, aldicarb sulfoxide and aldicarb sulfone). The seven contaminants removed from the priority list of 83 are being placed on this new priority list of 53 for reconsideration, as required by the Amendments. This final action will appear soon in the Federal Register.

FEDERAL AGENCIES TO DISCLOSE HAZARDOUS-
SUBSTANCE ACTIVITY IN PROPERTY SALES

EPA has proposed requirements for federal agencies to disclose to purchasers information on the storage, release and disposal of hazardous substances on federally-owned property when the property is sold or transferred. The disclosure must be provided with the sales or transfer contract. In addition, under the Superfund law, federal agencies are required to state that all necessary remedial action as a result of hazardous-substance activity has been taken prior to the sale and that any future action found necessary will be conducted by the federal agency. Under the proposal, certain types of residential property would be excluded. Also proposed are a storage reporting level and a notice form. The proposal was published in the Federal Register on Jan. 13. EPA is providing a 30-day public-comment period.

Robin Woods
202-382-4377

NEW CLEAN AIR RULES FOR SURFACE COATING
OF PLASTIC PARTS FOR BUSINESS MACHINES

The EPA Administrator on Jan. 12 signed and sent to the Federal Register new final rules under the Clean Air Act limiting emissions of volatile organic compounds

Christian Rice
202-382-3324

(VOCs) from affected facilities that perform exterior coating of plastic parts for business machines. Spray booths at an estimated 200 new, modified and reconstructed plants will become affected by 1990, reducing VOC emissions by approximately 2,400 tons per year. This represents a 51-percent reduction below baseline from total emissions from these facilities.

SAB MEETINGS SCHEDULED

The EPA Science Advisory Board's (SAB) Environmental Engineering Committee and Unsaturated Zone Code Subcommittee will hold two open meetings on Jan.

Elly Seng
202-382-4384

19-20 to review the Office of Solid Waste's Unsaturated Zone Code and to hear reports of the Mine Waste Risk Screening Subcommittee, discuss possible changes to the underground storage tank draft reports, consider a resolution on modeling and be briefed on agency engineering activities. The meetings will be held in room 1103, West Tower, EPA Headquarters, 401 M St. S.W., Washington, D.C. For more information, call Kathleen Conway at 202-382-2552.

The SAB's annual report from Director Terry Yosie for fiscal year 1987 is now available as is the "Review of a Framework for Improving Surface Water Monitoring Support for Decision-Making," which is a report of the SAB's Environmental Effects, Transport and Fate Committee. Call Joanna Foellmer at 202-382-4126 for copies of these reports.



Environmental News

FOR RELEASE: WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 13, 1988

Christian Rice (202) 382-3324

INTERNATIONAL TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE AND TRADE FAIR FOCUSES ON CFC SUBSTITUTES AND ALTERNATIVES

Hundreds of international scientists and engineers looking for substitutes and alternatives to stratospheric ozone-depleting chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and halons are meeting in Washington this week in a conference and trade fair that will have over 500 participants from 20 nations.

The technology workshops and exhibits, jointly sponsored by EPA, The Conservation Foundation and Environment Canada, are designed to serve as a forum on ways of reducing dependence on those chemicals suspected of depleting the stratospheric ozone layer.

The conference and trade fair features technology workshops, informal sessions with scientists and engineers working on new developments in the field and an exhibition hall with product and service displays from over 30 companies performing research on substitutes and alternatives to CFCs and halons.

The workshops focus on key applications of CFCs and halons being used by such industries as

- ° automobile manufacturers
- ° home appliance manufacturers
- ° electronics firms
- ° metal fabricators
- ° food packagers
- ° foam insulators and packagers
- ° medical services.

Workshop sessions deal with alternative chemicals, alternative technologies, substitute products and recovery and recycling. The participants in the workshops, who are producers, users, researchers and regulators, are searching for alternative chemicals, ways

of redesigning industrial processes and the possibility of switching to other products.

The conference and trade fair is being held at The Mayflower Hotel, 1127 Connecticut Avenue N.W., Washington, D.C. It opens on Wednesday, Jan. 13 at 10 a.m. with remarks by Russell E. Train, Chairman of World Wildlife Fund and The Conservation Foundation and A. James Barnes, EPA Deputy Administrator. The workshops and trade fair continue through noon on Friday, Jan. 15.

A media services room has been established for the conference and trade fair. On Wednesday, it is the New Hampshire Room; on Thursday and Friday it is the Senate Room. The phone number at the Mayflower Hotel is (202) 347-3000.

#

Note: A media point of contact for The Conservation Foundation is Leigh Ann Hurt (202) 293-4800; Environment Canada Gordon Harris (819) 997-6555. They or their representatives will be operating out of the media services room during the conference.



Environmental News

FOR RELEASE: THURSDAY, JANUARY 7, 1988

Al Heier (202)382-4374

EPA DEFERS IMPLEMENTATION OF PESTICIDE PROGRAM TO PROTECT ENDANGERED SPECIES

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced today that it is deferring implementation of its pesticide program to protect endangered species until the 1989 growing season.

The agency had considered implementing the plan beginning in February 1988, but decided more time was needed to develop an effective program.

In a Jan. 5 letter to the state commissioners of agriculture, EPA's Assistant Administrator for Pesticides and Toxic Substances, Dr. Jack Moore, pointed out that recent meetings held with the U.S. Departments of Agriculture and Interior, with state pest-control officials and others revealed the consistent assessment that basic elements of the endangered species program were not sufficiently developed to begin the program before the 1988 growing season as had originally been planned.

Dr. Moore also said in the letter, "This decision to defer the implementation phase and spend additional time on plan development and communication with all affected parties is in keeping with a recent Congressional action that enjoins EPA to work with the states and not seek to enforce the labeling program before Sept. 15, 1988."

EPA's Office of Pesticide Programs has been working for the past several years to strengthen its program to protect endangered species as required by the Endangered Species Act, which is administered by the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) of the Department of Interior. The Act states that actions authorized, funded or carried out by any federal agency must not jeopardize the existence of endangered species. The registration

of pesticides is considered an authorization for use, and thus is subject to the Endangered Species Act.

Endangered species have been identified by FWS as being potentially jeopardized by pesticide use in approximately 910 of 3,050 counties in the United States. The current EPA program would have affected approximately 110 active ingredients in pesticide products. EPA's original implementation plan called for product labels to include a list of states and counties containing endangered species potentially affected by certain pesticides. The labels would refer users to county bulletins for further information on the applicable restrictions on pesticide use. The bulletins would be available in county agricultural extension offices as well as in places where pesticides are sold.

EPA's endangered species original plan addresses pesticides in clusters according to registered use including forestry, cropland, mosquito larvae control and eradication, range and pastureland, non-cropland, alfalfa and associated hays, aquatic herbicides and rice. Implementation of all clusters has been deferred.

"During the coming year we will be working closely with each state to customize this program to fit its needs," Dr. Moore stated. "We want to ensure that the program is based upon accurate and practical information, and that we take the time to obtain input from all affected groups."

Moore added, "I would hope that pesticide users will act voluntarily to protect endangered species from pesticides while EPA works to develop a program for 1989."

During 1988, EPA will be engaged in a number of activities to prepare for implementation in 1989. EPA intends to solicit suggestions for revisions to the program from the public, conduct a broad public-education effort, refine the scientific data supporting the program and work with involved federal and state agencies.

"We believe this initial delay will ultimately result in improved protection for endangered species. It will help us to develop a solid, workable program for the longrun. The goal of our efforts remains to protect endangered species while at the same time avoid any unnecessary disruption of agriculture or other uses," Moore continued.

Several states have informed EPA that they intend to develop state-initiated plans, which will recommend alternative measures to protect endangered species from pesticide use. These states have been asked to submit their work plans to EPA by February 1988 and then to develop and refine their plans later in the year.



Environmental News

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: MONDAY, JANUARY 4, 1988

Al Heier (202) 382-4374

EPA REQUIRES MODIFICATION TO USE OF PESTICIDE CYANAZINE AS A CONDITION FOR CONTINUED REGISTRATION

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is requiring that risk-reduction measures be added to the product labels of the pesticide cyanazine as a condition for continued sale and use after determining that exposure may result in unreasonable risk to persons mixing, loading and applying this chemical.

Cyanazine (trade name Bladex®) is a pre- and post-emergent herbicide used to control annual grasses and broadleaf weeds.

EPA's action is based on animal studies which showed that exposure to cyanazine caused birth defects and may pose a significant risk to women of childbearing age who handle this product. EPA's principal concerns are risks to mixers, loaders and applicators resulting from dermal exposure to this chemical. The risk from dietary exposure to cyanazine is not considered to be significant at this time.

Today's action requires that the following use modifications be included on cyanazine product labels: the use of protective gloves for mixers and loaders (also includes applicators associated with ground-boom operation) and for adjusting, repairing or cleaning equipment used with cyanazine; the use of a chemical-resistant apron when mixing and loading cyanazine; and the use of a closed loading system when applying cyanazine through aerial or chemigation methods (the chemical is added in the process of irrigation). Product formulations which cannot be used in a closed loading system (i.e., wettable powder and granular formulations) must prohibit aerial use and chemigation on their labels.



Environmental News

FOR RELEASE: TUESDAY, DECEMBER 29, 1987

Al Heier (202)382-4374

EPA EXTENDS INTERIM CERTIFICATION PROGRAM ON GRAPES

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced today that it is extending through Dec. 31, 1988, the interim certification policy regarding the use of sulfur dioxide pesticides (sulfites) on grapes. Under this program, grapes imported or shipped in interstate commerce must be certified to contain no detectable residues of sulfites (less than 10 parts per million).

The interim certification policy which expires on Dec. 31, 1987, contains additional options of tagging 40 percent of the grape bunches or placarding grapes treated with sulfites. Under the extension issued today, no such additional options are provided to certification although they are still under consideration.

"We are not ruling out possible alternatives to certification such as 100 percent tagging, but additional time is needed to resolve this issue," said Doug Campt, EPA's Director of the Office of Pesticides. "Right now, we are still evaluating hundreds of comments received on the revised interim policy. However, because it will expire on Dec. 31, we need to proceed with the certification program to enable the industry to continue marketing grapes without disruption. This action should effectively protect the sulfite-sensitive population."

EPA is planning to hold meetings in early 1988 with other federal and state agencies, growers and other interested parties to discuss alternatives to certification, the content and operation of the certification programs during 1988 as well as the generation of data underway for establishing a tolerance (allowable residue level) of sulfites on grapes.

Sulfiting agents have been used for 40 years as fumigants on domestic and imported grapes to prevent grey-mold or bunch-rot spoilage during shipping or storage. These pesticides are applied in the form of gas or pads (the pads are placed inside the shipping crates) impregnated with sodium metabisulfite. Sulfites pose no health risk to most consumers, but do pose a potential health risk to a relatively small number of sulfite-sensitive individuals, the vast majority of whom are asthmatics.

In December 1986, the agency issued a one-year certification program for marketing sulfite-treated grapes so that data could be obtained for setting sulfur-dioxide tolerance levels. The certification policy allows shippers and growers, foreign and domestic, to market grapes treated with sulfiting pesticides provided they have a valid analysis certifying that the grapes contain no detectable residues of sulfur dioxide (less than 10 parts per million).

A tolerance for sulfur dioxide on grapes was not required by EPA until July 1986 because sulfites were "generally recognized as safe" (GRAS) by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). At that time FDA revoked the GRAS status of the use of sulfites on fruits and vegetables to be served or sold raw to consumers because sulfite-sensitive persons displayed adverse reactions to sulfites. Although this action did not affect the use of sulfites on grapes, EPA no longer considered the pesticide use to be GRAS.

Earlier this year, the California table-grape industry developed information which indicates that repeated sulfite treatment during long-term storage of grapes, necessary to maintain an even distribution of grapes throughout the fall and winter months, may result in detectable sulfur-dioxide residues (10 parts per million or higher). As a result, the California table-grape industry petitioned EPA to consider amending the interim certification policy and to allow placards or tags to be displayed at points of sale for all sulfitetreated grapes. In August, EPA granted the petition and required either placarding or tagging of 40 percent of the grape bunches to notify consumers that the grapes had been treated with sulfite.

The 1988 interim certification policy will permit shipment of tagged grapes picked and packed prior to Dec. 31, 1987.



Environmental News

FOR RELEASE: TUESDAY, DECEMBER 29, 1987

Robin Woods (202) 382-4377

EPA TO CONSIDER OPTIONS FOR REGULATING OIL AND GAS WASTES

The U. S. Environmental Protection Agency has concluded that full-scale federal regulation of wastes from the drilling and production of oil and gas as hazardous wastes is not necessary at this time.

In a Report to Congress released today, EPA said that present state and federal regulation of oil and gas wastes appears to be generally adequate. The agency also will consider working with states to review and improve the design, implementation and enforcement of existing state and federal programs to manage oil and gas. The agency must recommend regulatory approaches by June 1988.

Under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), the federal hazardous-waste-management law, Congress must approve any regulatory action taken by the agency on oil and gas wastes. Congress specifically exempted oil and gas wastes from RCRA regulation, pending completion of today's study and the regulatory determination. However, the underground injection of oil and gas wastes and waste discharges into surface waters are currently regulated under the federal Clean Water Act.

Dr. J. Winston Porter, EPA's Assistant Administrator for Solid Waste and Emergency Response, said, "We found that these wastes generally appear to be adequately regulated at this time. Damage incidents we documented from these wastes often occurred in violation of current regulations, underscoring the need for adequate enforcement of such requirements. EPA will work closely with Congress over the next few months to explore options for improving federal and state controls and their enforcement, where necessary."



Environmental News

FOR RELEASE: TUESDAY, DECEMBER 22, 1987

Martha Casey (202) 382-4378

AMC ALLIANCE RECALLED FOR EMISSION PROBLEM

The U. S. Environmental Protection Agency today said that about half of the Alliances built by the American Motors Corp. (AMC) in the 1983 model year are being recalled to correct a hydrocarbon and carbon-monoxide emissions problem. About 64,500 Alliances will have an air-bleed assembly installed in a vacuum hose to improve the air/fuel ratio. The repair also includes a modification to an engine temperature sensor.

Automotive hydrocarbon emissions come from unburned fuel that is released into the atmosphere. Together with nitrogen oxides in the presence of sunlight, these hydrocarbons can cause the formation of ozone, a known respiratory irritant. Carbon monoxide can reduce the body's capability to carry oxygen in the blood.

The emission problems were discovered during EPA's test program of in-use vehicles. AMC subsequently agreed to recall the vehicles.

Dealers that sold Alliance cars are now known as Jeep/Eagle dealers. Owners may take their vehicles to any Jeep/Eagle dealer for free repair. Jeep/Eagle, now a division of Chrysler Corp., began notifying owners of the recall today.



Environmental News

FOR RELEASE: TUESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 1987

Al Heier (202) 382-4374

EPA RESTRICTS USE OF ALACHLOR PESTICIDE AND CONCLUDES SPECIAL REVIEW

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has placed a number of restrictions on the use of the pesticide alachlor, including a requirement that use be limited to certified applicators and that other label modifications be included on alachlor products.

Today's action concludes a special review of alachlor which EPA initiated in January 1985, based on data which showed that exposure to alachlor resulted in oncogenic effects (tumor causing) in mice and rats. Alachlor is classified by EPA as a probable human carcinogen. The occurrence of alachlor in ground water and surface-water supplies in areas of heavy use also has been identified as a cause for concern.

Alachlor has been registered since 1969 as a selective herbicide to control pre-emergent grasses and broadleaf weeds. Annual use of alachlor is over 80 million pounds, making it one of the highest volume-of-use herbicides in the United States.

Exposure to alachlor can occur through mixing, loading and applying it to agricultural crops, eating foods containing residues of it and drinking water contaminated with residues.

As a result of all data evaluated since the special review was begun, the agency has determined that alachlor exposure to applicators can pose significant risks, and the current actions are designed primarily to reduce those risks. Dietary risk from alachlor, assuming the actual percent of crops treated, is reasonable given the benefits of continued use. The upper bound risk of cancer from dietary exposure over a lifetime is now calculated at about one person in one million exposed.

Studies of over 50 mid-western community water supplies (surface water) indicate that the levels which may occur in some cases are likely to be low and usually seasonal in occurrence. The risks associated with alachlor levels found in these surface-water supplies are generally in the one-in-one-million range of cancer risk.

EPA will soon propose a Maximum Contaminant Level for alachlor in public drinking water under the Safe Drinking Water Act. This would limit alachlor contamination in public drinking water to a specific level which does not pose unreasonable risks.

EPA found that available data were not adequate to make a definitive evaluation of the risks of ground-water contamination which alachlor may pose in areas of heavy use. To the extent that data are available from well-water sampling, a small percentage of wells in areas of heavy use contained alachlor, mostly in low concentrations (0.2 to 2.0 parts per billion). Higher concentrations in well water appear to result from spills and similar causes other than normal agricultural use. However, given the widespread use of alachlor, the available data are too limited to be representative. Thus, a determination on risk to ground water has been deferred pending completion of an EPA required nationwide monitoring study by the registrant due in 1989.

To reduce applicator, mixer/loader risks to reasonable levels, the agency is requiring the following label modifications: restrict the use of alachlor to certified applicators or persons under their direct supervision; require a mechanical transfer (pumping) system to mix and load alachlor for all applicators who treat 300 acres or more annually with alachlor; and reinstate aerial application with the provision that human flaggers are prohibited. In addition, the following statements must appear on alachlor product labels: "Restricted use due to oncogenicity"; "The use of this product may be hazardous to your health"; and "This product contains alachlor which has been determined to cause tumors in laboratory animals."

The benefits of alachlor were assessed in terms of economic effects which would result if alachlor were cancelled and growers forced to use the available alternatives. Cancellation of all uses of alachlor would result in first-year losses at the farm level of \$413 to \$465 million, which represents both increased costs for weed control and decreased value of production. In addition, alachlor plays a significant role in conservation tillage to prevent soil erosion. The overall benefits loss to society would range from about \$302 to \$404 million the first year.

Alachlor is manufactured by Monsanto Chemical Co. under the trade name Lasso®. Approximately 94 percent of the annual 80-84 million pounds of this compound is used on three crops: corn (63 percent), soybeans (28 percent) and peanuts (three percent). Other uses are on sweet corn, popcorn, cotton, dry beans, grain sorghum, green peas, lima beans (green) and sunflowers.



Environmental News

FOR RELEASE: TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 1987

Dave Ryan (202) 382-2981

EPA GIVES CONGRESS STATUS OF NATION'S WATER QUALITY

Water quality in the United States has improved significantly in the past 15 years, despite population and industrial growth, but persistent problems remain, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency told Congress today. Basing its conclusions on information provided by states, EPA says that toxic pollutants, ground-water contamination, nonpoint source pollution and wetland losses are among the important remaining problems affecting the nation's waters.

"The nation's commitment to improve water quality has had significant results," said EPA Administrator Lee M. Thomas. "About three quarters of the waters we have assessed are clean enough for fishing and swimming; and we have made substantial strides toward improving pollution-control efforts at all levels of government.

"Under the 1987 Clean Water Act amendments, new EPA and state responsibilities are evolving in areas such as toxics control and polluted runoff from diffuse areas such as farms, construction sites and city streets. A basic challenge of the coming years will be to manage these new responsibilities and maintain our aggressive approach to controlling traditional pollutants from factories and municipal sewage-treatment plants."

The report, titled "National Water Quality Inventory, 1986 Report to Congress," is the sixth in a series of biennial National Water Quality Inventories published since 1975. It is based on water-quality

information provided to EPA in 1986 by states and other jurisdictions. Water-quality conditions in about one-fifth of U.S. stream miles, one-third of lake acres and one-half of estuarine waters are assessed in the report. Estuaries are areas where fresh water meets salt water, such as bays and mouths of rivers. The report says that 74 percent of assessed river miles, 73 percent of assessed lake acres and 75 percent of assessed estuarine and coastal waters are clean enough to support the uses states have set for them. Under the federal 1972 Clean Water Act, states were required to designate bodies of water within their jurisdictions for different uses, such as fishing, swimming and drinking, and to set criteria or limits on pollutants to guarantee these uses.

Of the roughly 25 percent of waters assessed in this report that do not meet state use designations, nonpoint sources of pollution are cited as the cause of water-quality degradation in 76 percent of lake acres, 65 percent of stream miles and 45 percent of estuarine waters. A nonpoint source is one that cannot be traced to a specific spot. Examples include agricultural fertilizer runoff or sediment from construction sites. By contrast, of the roughly 25 percent of waters assessed in this report that do not meet state use designations, point sources of pollution such as sewage-treatment facilities and factories (which discharge wastes to waterways through a pipe, conduit or other discrete point) are said to be the cause of degradation in nine percent of assessed lake acres, 27 percent of assessed stream miles and 34 percent of assessed estuarine waters. The remaining waters with impairments are affected by natural conditions like low flow, by miscellaneous sources like sediment contamination and acid rain or by undetermined sources.

"Nonpoint sources appear to be increasingly important contributors to use impairment," the report concludes. "Intensified data collection efforts are certainly a factor in explaining their dominance. Another explanation may be that nonpoint source impacts are becoming more evident as point sources come under better control."

The report notes that progress in reducing the effect of point sources has been well documented. Many rivers once seriously degraded by municipal and industrial dischargers have been returned to health by the construction of new treatment facilities. Loadings of key pollutants to waterways have declined as levels of wastewater treatment have improved. Although nonpoint sources are inherently more difficult to control, continued activity is occurring in the application of nonpoint-source-management practices. The report notes that EPA and the states will be expanding and improving their water-pollution-control programs under the impetus provided by Section 319 of the Clean Water Act amendments of 1987. In particular, new emphasis is given to identifying waters impaired by nonpoint sources and toxic substances and to implementing programs for their control.

Nevertheless, a variety of pollutants continues to be found in the nation's waters at levels that prevent attainment of designated uses. The most commonly reported pollutants include fecal coliform bacteria, excess nutrients, turbidity, oxygen-demanding substances and toxic pollutants. Nutrients contribute to eutrophication, a process in which a lake is choked by abundant plant life. The toxic pollutants most often reported are metals like mercury, copper and cadmium; polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs); and pesticides like chlordane, DDT and dieldrin.

According to the report, 22 states found that 8,500 stream miles are affected by toxic substances. Sixteen states found elevated levels of toxics (above health or environmental protection standards) in 362,000 lake acres, and six states reported that 190 square miles of estuaries are affected by toxics. Industrial discharges and agricultural runoff are reported as the leading sources of elevated levels of toxics in the nation's surface waters.

Contamination of fish tissue is also reported. Twenty-seven states report finding detectable levels of toxics in some samples of fish tissue, and 23 report concentrations in localized areas exceeding U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) action levels (levels above which FDA recommends limiting consumption or not eating the substance at all). Twenty-four states report 285 fishing advisories due to toxics. Fifteen states, most of which also reported having advisories, cite 108 fishing bans in selected waters. Elevated levels of PCBs, mercury and chlordane are most often cited as the reason for the bans and advisories.

These findings, EPA notes, may underestimate the number of advisories and bans in U.S. waters, since not all states provided information on fishing restrictions. Some bans and advisories may apply to different segments of the same water body, or may apply differently to several species of fish in the same water body.

Ground water, which provides drinking water for more than half of the nation's population, is increasingly being recognized by the states as vulnerable to contamination. The most frequently cited sources of ground-water contamination are deficient septic systems, leaking underground storage tanks and agricultural activities like fertilizer application. The states report that sewage, nitrates (such as fertilizers) and synthetic organic chemicals (such as petroleum hydrocarbons used in gasoline) are the three most common contaminants affecting the nation's ground water.

EPA reports a significant increase in the past two years in the number and variety of ground-water protection activities being conducted by the states. Among these are the development of state strategies to protect ground water and expanded programs in ground-water classification, control of pollutant sources and protection of wellhead areas (the land around drinking-water wells).

Special concerns identified by the states, in addition to ground-water protection and toxic substances, include nonpoint-source pollution, loss of wetlands, funding needs, acid deposition and mine drainage into waterways.

The report discusses water-pollution-control programs being carried out at the federal and state levels and includes information on a number of new initiatives in estuarine protection, Great Lakes water quality, water monitoring and sludge management. The report highlights and describes the problems of a variety of U.S. waters, such as the Colorado River, the Chesapeake Bay and Boston Harbor.

Copies of the "National Water Quality Inventory 1986, Report to Congress" can be obtained by writing Alice Mayo, Monitoring and Data Support Division (WH-553), Office of Water Regulations and Standards, Office of Water, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 401 M St. S.W., Washington, D.C. 20460.



Environmental News

FOR RELEASE: TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 1987

Christian Rice (202) 382-3324
Martha Casey (202) 382-4378

EPA PROPOSES POLICY FOR AREAS FAILING TO MEET AIR-POLLUTION DEADLINES

Calling urban ozone "the most widespread and intractable air-pollution problem facing this country today," U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lee M. Thomas outlined a proposed new policy for dealing with areas failing to meet the ozone and carbon-monoxide pollution standards by the Dec. 31, 1987, target date identified in the Clean Air Act. The policy calls for sustained progress toward cleaner air without severe social and economic disruptions--at least in the near term.

EPA estimates that at least 50 areas, mostly larger metropolitan areas, will fail to meet the standards for either ozone or carbon monoxide, or both, by the end-of-the-year date. The agency is waiting to compile the 1987 air-quality data before making final determinations.

"This policy is tough but reasonable," Thomas said. "It will move cities steadily toward attainment of the standards in two important ways. First, EPA will continue to aggressively implement national air-pollution-control measures such as the federal motor-vehicle-control program, controls on gasoline volatility and controls designed to reduce emissions of gasoline vapors from cars and trucks. Second, state and local governments in non-attainment areas will implement additional measures designed to achieve further reductions in ozone and carbon monoxide."

Thomas also noted that EPA's proposed strategy will help Congress in its deliberations over reauthorization

of the Clean Air Act. "This policy incorporates the kinds of measures that can be implemented by federal, state and local governments," he said. "It lays out flexible deadlines that we know cities and states can meet through careful planning and determined implementation. It includes strong sanctions against areas that fail to make adequate progress. And it proposes these elements in a unified way for public scrutiny and comment. Congress will be able to use this federal input as it works to extend and improve the federal law."

EPA's proposed strategy prohibits construction of major new facilities if attainment of the standards is not projected within three or five years of the agency's approval of required new state clean-air plans. The policy also requires that most areas show reasonable progress toward attaining the standards by committing to a minimum three-percent average annual reduction in the pollutants, beyond federally-implemented measures and existing requirements.

The requirement for continued annual improvement must be met after gaining reductions to offset growth in the cities. Cities also cannot claim credit toward the three-percent requirement for reductions achieved by such federal measures as the motor-vehicle-control program or the eventual reductions due to EPA's proposed plans requiring on-board canisters to reduce evaporative emissions or changes in gasoline vapor pressure.

"Continued annual reductions in volatile organic compounds or carbon monoxide will place great emphasis on the planning process, and rightly so," Thomas said. "The difficult decisions that must be made at the state and local level will need the participation of all parties--the general public, government officials, the health community, environmentalists, consumer groups and various industry representatives."

The agency intends to evaluate the 1987 air-quality data and issue calls for new state clean-air plans (State Implementation Plans, or SIPs) early in 1988. The policy calls for certain commitments to near-term (1988-90) actions and an inventory of all emission sources before submittal of the SIP for EPA approval two years after the SIP call. EPA plans to issue its approval or disapproval within one year of submittal.

"A thorough and accurate inventory of all sources, both large and small, of volatile organic compounds is essential to the ultimate success of the control plan," Thomas said.

EPA believes that in order to reach the standards, each non-attainment area in the country will have to consider a range of stationary- and mobile-source-control options. These may include the development of new technology, the use of alternative fuels, innovative approaches to reducing vehicle use, the development or improvement of mass-transit systems and the control of numerous small pollution sources. The proposed policy establishes the framework for areas to properly plan a long-term strategy to bring ozone and/or carbon-monoxide levels down to the level of the standards which are designed to protect public health.

The policy outlines the various sanctions available under the Clean Air Act ranging from construction bans on major new sources to the withholding of federal highway funds and clean-air and sewage-treatment grants. In the near term, EPA is proposing that a construction ban on major new or modified sources of volatile organic compounds (in the case of ozone) or carbon monoxide be applied to areas not persuasively demonstrating attainment within three years of EPA's approval of the plan. Areas may obtain a waiver of two additional years if all reasonably available control methods do not bring about attainment. The construction ban will also be applied to those areas not meeting the commitments of currently approved plans. These bans would be lifted only when an approved plan demonstrates attainment in the near term (again, the following three or five years).

The agency proposes that highway funds (for certain areas), air grants, and sewage-treatment grants be withheld if an area is not making reasonable efforts toward implementing current or future plans. These sanctions will be lifted only after the state makes such efforts or after a non-implementation finding is reversed. EPA is not proposing to apply sanctions to any area for simply failing to attain the standards.

In June, EPA announced a proposed disapproval of the clean-air plans and a proposed construction ban for 14 areas of the country whose SIPs could not persuasively demonstrate attainment of the standards by the end of the year. In the case of one area, Cleveland, highway funding and clean-air-grant sanctions were also proposed. Final determinations for these areas are expected early next year. Today's proposed policy will likely apply to those 14 areas.

Ozone is a photochemical oxidant and the major component of smog. While ozone in the upper atmosphere is beneficial to life by shielding the earth from harmful ultraviolet radiation given off by the sun, high concentrations of ozone at ground level are a major health and environmental concern. Ozone is not emitted directly into the air, but is formed through complex chemical reactions between precursor emissions of volatile organic compounds and nitrogen oxides in the presence of sunlight. Both volatile organic compounds and nitrogen oxides are emitted by transportation and industrial sources. Volatile organic compounds are emitted from sources as diverse as autos, chemical manufacturing, dry cleaners, paint shops and other sources using solvents.

The health threat from ozone is particularly serious for those who suffer from respiratory illnesses, but even healthy people can suffer adverse effects. High levels of ozone can also substantially injure animals and damage crops, forests and man-made materials.

The primary National Ambient Air Quality Standard for ozone is 0.12 parts of ozone per million parts of air. It is a daily maximum one-hour average that may only be exceeded three times in a three-year period.

Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless, poisonous gas produced by the incomplete burning of fossil fuels. This pollutant tightly binds to hemoglobin, the oxygen-carrying protein in blood, reducing the amount of oxygen which reaches the heart, brain and other body tissues. Exposure to

carbon monoxide particularly endangers people with coronary artery disease. Even healthy people who are exposed to low levels of carbon monoxide can experience headaches, fatigue and slow reflexes from lack of oxygen.

Motor vehicles account for almost two-thirds of the nationwide carbon-monoxide emissions. The primary National Ambient Air Quality Standard for carbon monoxide is an eight-hour average of nine parts per million not to be exceeded more than once per year.

Today's proposed policy will appear in the Federal Register within the next several days and will be open to public comment for 60 days.

R-172

#



Environmental News

FOR RELEASE: THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 1987

Martha Casey (202)382-4378

GM RECALLS CARS TO CORRECT EMISSIONS PROBLEM

The U. S. Environmental Protection Agency said General Motors Corp. is recalling over half a million 1983 Chevrolet, Pontiac and GMC models to replace a broken switch in the evaporative-emission control system. EPA said 30,649 of the vehicles are California cars.

The affected models are the 1983 Chevrolet Impala, Caprice Classic, Camaro, Malibu, Monte Carlo and El Camino. Also included are the Pontiac Firebird, Bonneville, Grand Prix and Parisienne and the GMC Caballero. The models are equipped with 3.8, 5.0 and 5.7 liter engines. The total number of recall cars is 598,588.

EPA said the problem is a defective thermal vacuum switch (TVS) in the evaporative-emission control system which fails to open and close properly causing the vehicles to exceed the federal evaporative-emission and carbon-monoxide limits.

GM began notifying owners of the recall today. An improved TVS will be installed at no cost to the owners.

GM recalled nearly half a million 1982-model-year vehicles in July which used the same TVS. The 1983-model-year recall brings the total number of vehicles recalled for this problem to over one million.



Environmental News

FOR RELEASE: WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 1987

Dan O'Riordan (312) 353-3209
Margaret McCue (312) 886-6694

UNITED STATES AND
CANADA SIGN AMEND-
MENTS TO GREAT
LAKES WATER
QUALITY AGREEMENT

Representatives of the United States and Canada
today signed amendments to the Great Lakes Water Quality
Agreement of 1972.

The amendments were signed by EPA Administrator
Lee M. Thomas and Canada's Minister of the Environment,
Tom McMillan, in Toledo, Ohio, at the biennial meeting
of the International Joint Commission.

"I am delighted that representatives from the
United States, Canada, the Great Lakes Basin states and
various public and private interest groups concerned
with the Great Lakes have made these crucial negotia-
tions such an unqualified success," said Thomas.

The original Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement,
also signed by the United States and Canada, addressed
the overall pollution and water deterioration in the
five lakes that resulted in excessive algae growth and
the contamination of fish. Amendments in 1978 broadened
the agreement, developing an integrated ecological
approach to researching and understanding the problems
of the lakes.

Thomas said that the latest amendments have been
designed to reflect the advancements in science and
technology since 1978. The amendments are also designed
to assure their prompt implementation.

The U.S. Department of State led the negotiations
of the amendments with Canada, while representatives
from the EPA's Great Lakes National Program Office
served as members of the negotiating team and provided
technical support.

The new amendments include the development of
individual lake management plans to control critical

pollutants; remedial action plans for severely polluted areas; programs to address toxic substances entering the Great Lakes from air, land-runoff and ground-water sources; and improved management and accountability procedures to encourage better use of existing resources.

EPA Region 5 Administrator and National Program Manager for the Great Lakes Valdas V. Adamkus said, "The amendments continue the giant strides the United States and Canada have made in protecting and maintaining the Great Lakes and their surrounding environment. In return, the lakes will continue to enhance the quality of life, both economically and aesthetically, for the entire region and beyond."

R-173

#



Environmental News

FOR RELEASE: TUESDAY, DECEMBER 1, 1987

Christian Rice (202) 382-3324

EPA PROPOSES
CUTBACKS IN
CFC PRODUCTION
TO PROTECT OZONE
LAYER

New domestic regulations restricting production and consumption of the ozone-depleting chemicals called chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) were proposed today by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lee M. Thomas.

"These rules will fully implement the Montreal Protocol to protect the stratospheric-ozone layer," said Thomas. "Our proposal constitutes the American response to the global commitment to reduce the risks of stratospheric-ozone depletion."

The proposed rules require a freeze at 1986 production and consumption levels of CFC-11, -12, -113, -114 and -115 on the basis of their relative ozone-depletion weights. This freeze will be followed in mid-1993 by a 20-percent reduction from the 1986 levels and in mid-1998 by a 50-percent reduction from the 1986 levels.

The rules would also prohibit production and consumption of Halon 1211, 1301 and 2402 from exceeding 1986 levels on a weighted basis beginning in approximately 1992.

Imposed under Section 157 of the Clean Air Act, the rules would constitute the United States' implementation of the "Montreal Protocol on Substances That Deplete the Ozone Layer" which was signed by 24 countries, including the United States, on Sept. 16 in Montreal.

EPA proposes to allocate quotas reflecting the allowable level of production and consumption to each of the U.S. firms engaged in these activities in 1986. Trading of allocated quotas would be permitted. Exports and imports of the restricted chemicals will also be allowed consistent with restrictions contained in the Montreal Protocol. This approach will provide a cost-effective means of achieving the regulatory goal,

spur technological innovation, minimize administrative requirements and facilitate enforcement.

In a separate notice accompanying today's proposal, EPA is requiring firms involved in producing, importing or exporting any of the regulated chemicals in 1986 to report these activities to the agency.

"The spirit of cooperation exhibited by all parties concerned--the CFC industry, the public interest groups, the scientific community and the Congress--has enabled the United States to forge and maintain a position of world leadership on the stratospheric-ozone issue," Thomas said.

The control requirements in today's proposal are scheduled to take effect at the same time they are required under the Montreal Protocol. Article 16 of the Protocol provides that the Protocol will enter into force on Jan. 1, 1989, provided that 11 nations or regional economic integration organizations representing two-thirds of 1986 global consumption have ratified the Protocol by that date and that the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer has entered into force. Otherwise, the Protocol will enter into force 90 days after that condition has been satisfied.

The President of the United States is expected to transmit the Montreal Protocol to the Senate for ratification as early as this month. U.S. ratification is expected sometime in 1988.

Concern about possible depletion of the ozone layer from CFCs was first raised in 1974 with publication of research which theorized that chlorine released from CFCs could migrate to the stratosphere and reduce the amount of ozone which shields the planet from harmful ultraviolet radiation. Because some of the CFCs have an atmospheric lifetime of over 120 years and do not break down in the lower atmosphere, they migrate slowly to the stratosphere where higher energy radiation strikes them, releasing chlorine. Once freed, the chlorine acts as a catalyst repeatedly combining with and breaking apart ozone molecules. If ozone depletion occurs, because of the long atmospheric lifetimes of CFCs, it will take from many decades to over a century for the ozone layer to return to past concentrations.

In 1978, EPA and the Food and Drug Administration banned the use of CFCs as aerosol propellents in all but essential applications. During the early 1970s, CFCs used as aerosol propellents constituted over 50 percent of total CFC consumption in the United States. This particular use of CFCs now has been reduced by approximately 95 percent of the amount consumed in aerosols in 1974. Today's proposal does not affect the 1978 regulations. Since 1978, CFC use has continued to expand in other applications (e.g., as a foam-blowing agent, refrigerant and solvent). Total production in the United States now has surpassed pre-1974 levels. Since 1983, worldwide production of CFCs has grown at an average annual rate of five percent.

EPA's regulatory impact analysis of today's proposed rules assessed the costs and benefits over the period 1989-2075. Costs of reducing CFCs and halons called for in the proposed rules are estimated at under \$1 billion through the year 2000. For those areas where quantification was possible, monetary benefits would far outstrip costs.

The proposal meets the requirements of an agreement settling a lawsuit brought by the Natural Resources Defense Council in the District Court of the District of Columbia seeking to compel EPA to promulgate regulations under Section 157 of the Clean Air Act.

Today's proposed rules, which will appear in the Federal Register within the next several days, have a 60-day public comment period. A public hearing is planned and will be announced in the near future.

R-177

#