

February 26, 1987

## PCB DUMPING BY 4 PIPELINES REPORTED

By PHILIP SHABECOFF, SPECIAL TO THE NEW YORK TIMES

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Dr. John A. Moore, the agency's Assistant Administrator for Pesticides and Toxic Substances, said the four pipeline companies, in response to an E.P.A. query, reported that PCB-laden wastes had been disposed of in at least one site along their right of way.

Agency officials and environmental experts said the PCB contamination along the pipelines could constitute a serious threat of cancer and other health problems to people living or working near them. But the E.P.A. officials cautioned that the full extent of the problem was still to be determined.

The agency said that "in light of the PCB contamination problems identified in the case of the Texas Eastern Gas Pipeline Company," it was establishing a special panel, headed by Deputy Administrator A. James Barnes, to review the entire problem of PCB's along interstate pipeline systems. Dumping Reported at 51 Sites

Texas Eastern has acknowledged burying PCB's in 71 pits at 51 sites along its pipeline, which extends from Texas to New Jersey in the vicinity of New York City.

The four other pipeline companies that reported disposing of their wastes in earthen pits are the Consolidated Gas Transmission Corporation, the Transcontinental Gas Pipeline Corporation, the Tennessee Gas Pipeline Company and the ANR Pipeline Company, Dr. Moore said. He added that ANR had reported that wastes containing PCB's had been deposited at multiple sites.

The agency also said it would check waste disposal practices of six other pipeline companies that told the E.P.A. they had not disposed of PCB wastes in earthen landfills. The six are the Algonquin Gas Transmission Company, the Natural Gas Pipeline Company, the Columbia Gulf Transmission Company, the Columbia Gas Transmission Company, the Texas Gas Transmission Company and Transwestern Natural Gas Inc., according to an agency spokesman.

PCB's, polychlorinated binphenyls, are chemicals formerly used as lubricants in pipelines and in a wide variety of heavy electrical equipment. After it was discovered in the 1970's that exposure to PCB's can cause cancer and other illness, its use in new products was barred and its proper disposal required under the Toxic Substances Control Act of 1976. However, many products containing PCB's are found throughout the country and many PCB disposal sites still have not been cleaned up.

A spokeswoman for ANR Pipeline said the company had finished cleaning up its sites in December. A spokesman for Consolidated Gas said he was still checking on the PCB situation but that the company had never used any PCB-based oils and any contamination would have come from gas contaminated with PCB's that ran through its pipeline.

In Houston, a spokesman for Tenneco Inc., which owns the Tennessee Gas Pipeline Company, said the company had told the E.P.A. that "one small pit" had been used to dispose of waste oils but that tests showed no PCB contamination at the site. He added that the company would cooperate fully with any Federal or state investigation. The spokesman said that small amounts of PCB's had appeared in the pipeline

as a result of transporting gas for other companies but that Tennessee Gas had "gone to great lengths" to assure proper disposal. An Inspection Nears Completion

In the Texas Eastern case, the Environmental Protection Agency said today that it would complete an inspection of the company's disposal sites within a week and that if any actual threats to public health were detected public notice would be sent out immediately and "proper protective action will be taken."

Dr. Moore said today that the agency had learned that some of the Texas Eastern landfills might also contain extremely toxic dioxins and dibenzofurans, chemical byproducts that also pose serious health threats. Their presence compounds the risks presented by PCB's and will bring other antipollution statutes into play, he added.

Fred Wichlep, a spokesman for Texas Eastern, said traces of dioxin had been found at two disposal sites, one near St. Francisville, La., and the other near Bechtelsville, Pa. Penalties Are Studies

E.P.A. enforcement officials, meanwhile, said there appeared to be little doubt that Texas Eastern had committed violations of the law. Thomas L. Adams Jr., the agency's enforcement chief, said in a telephone interview that "at this point we are thinking of an effective, enforceable cleanup situation and penalties."

Mr. Adams and other agency officials said, however, that as of now there was no evidence that the company knew it was dumping wastes with illegally high levels of PCB's and thus there were no legal ground for criminal prosecution.

But Thomas Gallagher, the director of the agency's Enforcement Investigation Center, said, "one would think that they should have found out what the real numbers are" before the waste pits were filled in.

A recent study by the company has found soil contaminated with as many as 48,000 parts per million of PCB's. The agency regulates all wastes with more than 50 parts per million of the chemical.

Mr. Wichlep said that his company did not want to comment on the E.P.A. investigation or any possible settlement or penalties.

Dr. Moore said that "to the degree that people have access to these sites there could be physical problems." He also said there was a possibility that some of the disposal pits could be situated near water supplies into which the chemicals could leak. But he added that most of the sites "are in remote areas."

Dr. Ellen K. Silbergeld, a senior toxicologist with the Environmental Defense Fund who is a frequent adviser to the E.P.A., said the amount of PCB's reported at some of the Texas Eastern sites was extraordinarily high and that the potential health effects on exposed people could be "extremely serious."

Contact with the PCB's, she said, could lead to a variety of illness, including damage to the immune system and fetuses, liver disease and chloracne, an acute form of skin rash, as well as cancer.

She said steps should be taken immediately to keep people living near the sites away from the contaminated areas and that underground water supplies should be checked immediately to see if the PCB's had reached them.

Dr. Moore said the agency would take appropriate action to protect the public, including immediate cleanup of some sites and fencing off others to keep the public away. But he said that from the information he had received so far, he did not think drastic action would be required at most of the sites.

The agency statement said that investigation of the other pipelines would be taken in conjunction with the states involved and with the pipeline companies.