

**MINNESOTA: 3M HAZARDOUS WASTE INCINERATOR FINED FOR VIOLATIONS.**

"The 3M Company will pay a \$95,000 fine for air pollution and other violations at a hazardous waste incinerator under a settlement agreement approved Dec. 20 by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA). An official with the agency said he did not believe what was emitted from the incinerator in Cottage Grove, Minn., caused a health risk or any environmental damage...Lou Chamberlain, supervisor of MPCA's waste incinerator team, said 3M was cited for a number of opacity and fugitive emission violations during inspections of the incinerator between April and August of 1988. He said it was also cited for four unreported breakdowns that occurred in 1987 and 1988. According to Chamberlain, the agency's inspections found that the incinerator was emitting more carbon monoxide than its permit allowed between April and August. He said the agency's position was that the fugitive emission violations would not have existed if the company had taken reasonable care of the incinerator...The company, for its part, did not necessarily agree with all of MPCA's citations, but did agree to the stipulation agreement, which does not specify any company liability. 3M spokesman Rick Renner said the company shut down the incinerator just days after it learned of the citations. The shutdown was planned months before, he said, and the company has tried to keep itself on the cutting edge of hazardous waste disposal by upgrading the incinerator every two to three years. Renner said it is 3M's contention that all of the problems identified by the pollution control agency were resolved by the renovation of the incinerator, which cost more than \$3 million. According to Renner, the Cottage Grove incinerator burns waste solvents that are left over from manufacturing processes...Renner said the incinerator, which is capable of burning 700 55-gallon drums of solvents each day, was shut down in September. It reopened in late November and is now operating..."

*Environment Reporter, Current Developments, 1-6-89, pg.1807.*

**DIOXIN: LIMITING FORMATION OF DIOXIN WOULD AVERT COSTLY CLEANUPS AND SLUDGE PROBLEMS.**

"The problem of dioxin in waste water and consumer products could be best dealt with by preventing their formation in the first place rather than trying to control their subsequent release, an environmental scientist told a House hearing Dec. 8. Ellen Silbergeld, toxicologist for the **Environmental Defense Fund**, said in testimony prepared for the House Energy and Commerce Committee on Health and Environment that the 'reactive posture' of U.S. regulatory agencies creates a situation in which they are always trying to catch up to dioxin contamination of the environment, food, and other products. 'The past five years has seen a horrendously expensive and only partially successful attempt to clean up dioxins at hazardous waste sites...At the same time, we know that dioxins are formed during incineration, the manufacture of certain chemical products, and in pulpmaking,' she added. 'Because of their extreme potency and biological persistence, dioxins in all these sources can be far more effectively dealt with by preventing their formation in the first place rather than attempting to control their subsequent release.' Furthermore, she told the panel, regulations to limit the amount of dioxin in effluents from pulp and paper mills could end up putting more dioxin in sludges. Then, Silbergeld added, disposing of dioxin-contaminated sludge would pose further problems. She said the chlorinated hydrocarbons such as dioxin that are formed in the pulpmaking process end up in pulp, waste water, solids, products, and air. It would be inappropriate to develop a control strategy that just shifted the problem from one area to another. 'In particular,' she said, 'Congress should ensure that any regulations or voluntary programs proposed to deal with this problem does not shift them from products to sludge wastes'...The hearing was the first in a planned series on dioxin and concerned the safety of food and paper products containing the substance, panel chairman Rep. Henry Waxman (D-CA) said. A joint study by EPA and the **American Paper Institute**, released in September 1987, found that pulp used to make a broad range of paper products

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contains low levels of dioxin...Elkins (director of EPA's Office of Toxic Substances) and Silbergeld also said dioxin is only one type of chlorinated organic compound in bleached paper and paper mill effluents that may be of toxicologic concern...Silbergeld of **EDF** testified at the House hearing that bleached paper products are not the only way people come into contact with dioxin. However, she said, preventing even short-term exposure to dioxin by developing organisms -including babies wearing disposable diapers- is critical. Most human exposure to dioxin is through food, she said. The dioxin in food is believed to come from pesticides contaminated with the toxic chemical, discharges from chemical manufacturing, and combustion, as well as sludges from paper mills used on agricultural fields, she said. Janet Hieber, **Greenpeace** USA's Washington, DC, representative on toxics, showed the subcommittee examples of food cartons and a popular brand of disposable diapers, Pampers Ultra, which were made in Sweden with unbleached paper. 'There's no reason why we (in the US) can't switch to non-bleached pulp immediately,' Hieber said." Environment Reporter, Current Developments, 12-16-88, pgs. 1658-1659. **Note:** While in Sweden, August 1988, the editors of **Waste Not** found that paper items such as milk cartons, toilet tissue, paper hand towels, and cup cake papers, were all made with unbleached paper. The awareness in Sweden of dioxin contamination in bleached paper products is far ahead of the U.S.

**DIOXIN: FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION TO STUDY MILK CARTONS.** "The Food and Drug Administration is scheduled to conduct a special study of milk cartons for a potent cancer-causing chemical...Contamination by dioxin also poses a potential threat to consumers of other paper products, including disposable diapers, tampons, coffee filters, and TV dinners, according to testimony before the health subcommittee of the House Energy and Commerce Committee. However, there is no immediate cause for consumer alarm, because the traces of dioxin are barely measurable, Richard Ronk, director of FDA's Bureau of Food Safety, told the subcommittee. The agency nevertheless decided to speed up a test originally scheduled for next summer and begin immediate sampling of milk. The new sense of urgency was prompted by a Canadian study of milk samples that disclosed disturbingly high levels of dioxin. Scientists fear that the dioxin may have moved from the paper cartons into the milk itself. The dioxin is produced when chlorine is used to bleach wood pulp to make paper products white...If the Canadian results are duplicated on a wide scale in American milk supplies, the **lifetime risk of cancer would be one in 10,000**, a disturbingly high rate. The government normally regulates and prohibits compounds when the risk is greater than one in one million, according to subcommittee staff. The FDA has not previously found any detectable levels of dioxin in its routine testing of milk. Dioxins have not been detected in diapers, but tests have disclosed the presence of **furans**, another group of compounds often found with dioxins." Poughkeepsie Times, NY, 12-9-88.

**"NO MARGIN OF SAFETY: A PRELIMINARY REPORT ON DIOXIN POLLUTION AND THE NEED FOR EMERGENCY ACTION IN THE PULP AND PAPER INDUSTRY"** - This excellent report is based on

US EPA documents either leaked to **Greenpeace** or obtained through the Freedom of Information Act by its authors. The report, first released in August 1987, documents EPA's collusion with dioxin polluters. This report is invaluable for those concerned with dioxin contamination from the paper and pulp industry and for anyone researching the dioxin issue. Published by **Greenpeace USA**, the authors of the report are Carol Van Strum and Paul E. Merrell. Available from: **Greenpeace Great Lakes Toxic Campaign**, 578 Bloor Street West, Toronto, Ontario M6G 1K1, Canada. **Greenpeace** does not charge for its reports, but a donation of \$10 would help cover expenses for this lengthy and well-documented report.

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Paul & Ellen Connett, Editors  
82 Judson Street  
Canton, New York 13617  
(315)379-9200

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