

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC MEETING

ON NEW BEDFORD HARBOR

SUPERFUND SITE

October 17, 1985

Approximately 40 people attended the public meeting at the Whaler Motor Inn in New Bedford, MA.

Merrill S. Hohman, Director, EPA Region I Waste Management Division, moderated the meeting.

Jackie Prince, EPA Site Project Officer, summarized past studies, outstanding technical issues, and plans for additional studies, to be done by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, of the PCB "hot spots."

Norman Francingues, of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, explained in detail plans for these additional studies.

Patricia Sarris, Assistant U.S. Attorney, explained the status of a lawsuit by EPA and NOAA against potentially responsible parties for past and future study and cleanup costs and natural resource damages.

Discussion focussed on the following issues:

1. Severity of hazard posed by the site
 2. Hot spot cleanup options
 3. Enforcement/litigation
 4. Proposed Army Corps studies
- Funding/delays

- Technical

- General

1. Severity of Hazard Posed by the Site

Community members disagree as to the impact of the hurricane barrier on the PCB problem. Some residents believe that the hurricane barrier has worsened the problem by containing the PCBs in the estuary and raising their concentrations. These residents believe PCBs aren't a severe health threat. They are concerned about the negative effect information about the danger of PCBs has on the city's image.

Other residents countered these arguments. Studies by the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute have revealed marine life reproductive effects in Buzzards Bay. The dike has prevented contamination from affecting a much larger area, they feel. "The solution to pollution is not dilution," said the Sierra Club. Concern was expressed about dredge spoils from the hurricane barrier construction that were disposed at an area now used as a playing field.

2. Hot Spot Cleanup Options.

Judy Tonnesson spoke against upland disposal, mentioning potential problems with truck traffic in residential areas. Representative "Sparky" Goyette opposed using Marsh Island as an upland disposal site. He promised to offer EPA an alternate community-supported site within 30 days. He pointed out that the New Bedford side of the estuary is already degraded by the contamination. New Bedford can't expect another community to accept its problem, he said.

The Sierra Club advocated reevaluation of incineration and other

destruction technologies. Containment should be viewed as a temporary solution.

Dr. Philip Gidley commended EPA for focussing its efforts on the hot spots. He advocated on-site disposal. A clay liner is not necessary; one inch of organic matter would prevent PCB migration for 15,000 years, he said. EPA's definition of "clean" is too strict. He spoke against in-harbor capping (pineapple upside-down cake). He suggested a tide gate for the Coggeshall Bridge underflow.

3. Enforcement/Litigation

Robert Davis expressed concern that public information may be limited by the ongoing litigation. He requested that EPA's Responsiveness Summary (response to comments received on the hot spot cleanup options) be made public and that the public be allowed to comment on the Agency's responses.

Sparky Goyette advocated that penalties against responsible parties be based on ability of the companies to pay. Aerovox provides 1400 jobs, and the community would suffer if they went out of business.

Citizens asked what impact the success or failure of litigation have on the cleanup?

4. Proposed Army Corps Studies.

Technical: A suggestion was made that deeper sediment samples be taken. Dr. Philip Gidley asked that the samples be analyzed for selenium and that 48 hours elapse between drillings.

Funding/delays: Citizens responded to delays due to lack of

Superfund reauthorization by asking where they could go to request money, when will funding become available, etc.

General: The Agency was asked why the Corps was not involved early in the study so as to prevent the need for the additional studies.