

# Rachel's Environment & Health News

## #7 - New Data Reveal Who Produces Toxics, Industry By Industry -- Wall Of Secrecy Begins To Fall January 11, 1987

Where do hazardous wastes come from? Over the years, American industrialists have made decisions causing large quantities of hazardous chemicals to enter the environment. The public has been excluded from these decisions. If the public had been asked, the decisions might have been made differently. But the decision-making process was closed.

Now, during the '80s, those decision-making processes are being opened up to public scrutiny for the first time. This represents a new frontier: public input into industrial decisions affecting the natural and human environments. Providing the information-engine for this movement is an increasingly sophisticated coalition of environmental, labor and community activists armed with computer technology, making it possible for local citizens and small-town decision-makers to gain access to information they would previously have been denied.

During February, 1987, we will begin putting on-line in the Rachel database a unique resource that tells people what chemicals are being used by what industries. For 535 representative factories from 143 different standard industrial classifications (SIC codes, 4-digit), we will present quantitative information about their use of 100 different cancer-causing chemicals: how much they purchase, how much they produce, how much they dump into a local sewer, how much they dump into local rivers and streams, how much inventory they maintain at any one time, how much they allow to escape via the smokestack, how much they allow to escape through fugitive (uncontrolled) emissions, and, lastly, how much they dump.

The data are specific to industries in New Jersey (America's number one producer of chemicals), but the data are typical of industries everywhere, so all decision-makers and interested citizens can find this unique information resource useful and relevant to their local situation. At the very least, armed with this information, citizens can ask the manager of a local factory, "In New Jersey, your industry uses these toxic chemicals in large quantity. Is your operation different? If you say Yes, give us the data to back up your claim."

The data was gathered from 1978 through 1982 in a unique program conducted by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). The data-gathering effort began when Dr. Glenn Paulson was directing scientific research for the New Jersey DEP. Dr. Paulson is now with Clean Sites, Inc., in Alexandria, VA. The intention of the program was to gather data about industries, so that the sources of hazardous and toxic chemicals could become known for the first time.

--Peter Montague

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### COURT BACKS MR. REAGAN'S VIEWS ABOUT CONTROL OF CARCINOGENS

A federal appeals court in November, 1986, ruled that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) acted properly when it refused to set strict limits on emissions of vinyl chloride, a cancer-causing chemical used in making plastics. The court said the Clean Air Act did not support the view of the plaintiff, the Natural Resources Defense Council, that the EPA was required to set strict limits on vinyl chloride emissions and said that EPA Administrator Lee Thomas had properly concluded that the agency had the discretion to weigh cost and available technology in deciding not to impose the regulations.

--Peter Montague

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### NO. 1 KILLER CHEMICAL, TOBACCO, RAISES MANY FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES

Two national essay contests are being held regarding smoking; both sides in the cigarette fight say they are holding their contest to increase public awareness of the issue. In Oct. 1986 the Philip Morris Companies announced a contest with a \$15,000 grand prize and winners in each state for essays answering how an advertising ban on tobacco products would affect "the future of free expression in a free market economy."

A spokesman for the NY-based maker of Marlboro cigarettes said the contest was in response to a call made by the American Medical Association (AMA) for a ban on all tobacco advertising except at the point of sale.

On Nov. 3, 1986 a physicians' organization, Doctors Ought to Care, announced their contest with a \$1,000 top prize. Their contest, aimed primarily at law students, asks, "Are tobacco company executives criminally liable for the deaths, diseases and fires that their products cause?"

In broadest terms, tobacco raises questions about car manufacturers who knowingly sell unsafe products to an unsuspecting public, chemical company executives who sell products they know will pollute the environment when they are discarded, and pesticide executives who convince farmers of the need for dangerous chemicals they know will end up contaminating mothers' milk and everyone's morning cup of coffee.

--Peter Montague

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