

# Rachel's Environment & Health News

## #2 - Group Sues EPA A Second Time To Control Lead In NJ's Air

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For the second time, the Natural Resources Defense Council, a national environmental organization, has sued the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for failing to meet deadlines for controlling lead emissions in NJ. In 1982, the organization sued the EPA for missing the 1980 deadline set by the Clean Air Act and a new deadline was set for 1984. NJ is one of 4 states (NJ, AL, IN, and NE) that do not have approved plans for lead. One source, The U.S. Metals Refining Company, a Carteret smelter, has held up approval for a plan in NJ. The plant exceeds ambient air standards for lead even when not in operation because large quantities of lead have settled on the ground. The smelter has been the subject of 6 years of consent orders and a \$215,300 fine last winter. The company plans to permanently close the smelter in Oct. 1986 and has been ordered to study the steps needed to bring lead emissions down to acceptable levels.

--Peter Montague

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### NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION FINES TMI \$40,000 FOR VIOLATIONS

The federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) recently fined the operator of the Three Mile Island (TMI) nuclear power plant (PA) \$40,000 for violating government rules for cleaning up debris from the 1979 accident at the plant. According to the director of the NRC's Office of Inspection and Enforcement, the violation, involving equipment on a crane, was another, more serious example of previous failures to follow government specifications. The error was put in the third most serious of five categories.

--Peter Montague

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### EPA PULLS LICENSE OF PESTICIDE ORIGINALLY OK'D ON PHONY DATA

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued emergency orders barring the sale or use of the widely used pesticide, dinoseb, because the chemical causes "a very serious risk" of birth defects. Between 7 million to 11 million pounds of dinoseb is sprayed each year as a weed killer on soybeans, cotton, potatoes, peanuts, alfalfa, snap beans, peas, grapes, almonds and other crops. The agency found that there is a threat of birth defects to pregnant field workers exposed to the chemical and that dinoseb can cause sterility in exposed men. An estimated 45,000 workers, including 3,000 women are exposed to dinoseb. Uniroyal Chemical Company, one of the producers of dinoseb, said the company felt it was safe when used as directed on the label, but that they were aware of, but had not yet seen, the new EPA studies on health effects. A spokesman for Uniroyal said his company planned to ask the EPA for a hearing on its decision and hoped it could keep dinoseb on the market after changing the label. Dinoseb was one of hundreds of pesticides permitted on the market on the basis of safety tests conducted by Industrial Bio-Test Laboratory, a concern later found to have submitted many flawed or fraudulent reports on its procedures and results.

--Peter Montague

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### PIONEERING EFFORT BEGINS IN NJ, TO CONTROL NON-POINT-SOURCE POLLUTANTS IN NAVESINK RIVER

Federal, state and local agencies are joining forces in an effort to clean up the Navesink River in northeastern Monmouth County, NJ. It is the first attempt at controlling nonpoint source runoff--water pollution from sources other than discharge pipes. The Navesink has no municipal or industrial discharges, instead, runoff--from city and

suburban storm drains and nearby horse farms--pollutes the river. Some horses are allowed to roam into streams in the watershed and piles of manure wash into the Navesink's tributaries. Storm runoff can carry with it dog and cat waste. Boating wastes may be a secondary source of pollution. The Navesink project will concentrate on trying to change public habits that add to the nonpoint pollution in the river.

--Peter Montague

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### SULFUR FROM SMELTER IN MEXICO BRINGS ACID RAIN TO WESTERN U.S.

According to spokesmen for the Environmental Defense Fund, (EDF) sulfur emissions from the recently opened smelter in Nacozari, Mexico, across the border from AZ, will boost the acids in western rainfall back to a level known to damage the environment. Sulfur dioxide emissions in the West, mostly from copper smelters in AZ and other southwestern states, peaked in 1981 and then fell drastically with the lagging copper market. The level of acidity in rain hundreds of miles downwind in the Rocky Mountains also fell. The Mexican government has agreed to place costly pollution controls on the Nacozari plant by 1988 and the US has imposed controls on American smelters. The spokesmen said when all the planned controls are in place, sulfur dioxide emissions in the Southwest will decline markedly.

--Peter Montague

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### EPA SEEKS CONTROL OVER WOOD STOVES, CITING HEALTH RISKS FROM CANCEROUS AIR POLLUTION

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) said that it will propose rules to limit emissions from new wood burning stoves because smoke from wood burning stoves is a significant source of air pollution (15%) in the nation and emits compounds that could cause cancer. The agency estimated that 12 million wood stoves were now in use and 800,000 more were being sold each year.

--Peter Montague

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Descriptor terms: nuclear regulatory commission; fines; tmi; enforcement; compliance; remedial action; nuclear power; epa; emissions; wood stoves, air pollution; cancer; limits; regulations; regulation; bans; pesticides; birth defects; dinoseb; industrial biotest laboratory; uniroyal chemical company; testing; fraud; food safety; agriculture; nj; navesink river, monmouth county, nj; water pollution; non-point sources; epa; al; in; ne; nrdc; lawsuits; emissions; lead; clean air act; us metals refining company; az; smelting; sulfur; sulfur dioxide; acid rain; edf; criteria; studies;