

EXTRACTIONS



a newsletter from **O'CONNOR ASSOCIATES**

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SELLERS OF CONTAMINATED LAND CAN BE SUED

A U.S. court ruling suggests that in that country the time honoured rule of "let the buyer beware" does not necessarily apply to property contaminated by toxic waste. In the case of *Sunnen Products v. Chemtech Industries*, a federal court found that the buyer of contaminated property could sue under the Superfund Act to force the seller to pay for cleanup costs.

CHANGES AT FEARO

Mr. R.M. Robinson, executive chairman of the Federal Environmental Assessment and Review Office, has announced changes affecting FEARO operations in western and northern Canada. Effective March 31, 1988, responsibility for FEARO's existing Northern Region will be split between Pacific and Central regional offices and a new Quebec Region will be established. Responsibility for Alberta and the Northwest Territories will be transferred to the Pacific Region office located in Vancouver, while that for Saskatchewan will go to the Central Region office in Ottawa.

ENVIRONMENT REPORT CARDS

Environment Canada plans to initiate a program of state-of-the-environment (SOE) reporting. As presently envisioned, the program will include the preparation and distribution of a series of non-technical reports on a regular basis supplemented by a major report every five years. To support the reporting effort, a permanent SOE database will be created and maintained.

Proponents of Environment Canada's plans argue that SOE reporting will improve the public's understanding of interactions between human activities and environmental quality and provide a tool for measuring the performance of governments and industry in instituting environmental protection. SOE reports, they say, will be used to guide environmental policy-making. Proponents also point to support for SOE reporting expressed by environmental groups and to the recommendations for some form of "statement of environmental conditions" that were put

forward by the Macdonald Commission on the Canadian Economy and by the Inquiry on Federal Water Policy.

To expedite the proposed program of SOE reporting and to solicit a broader base of public input, Environment Canada has begun publishing a newsletter entitled *State-of-the-Environment Reporting*. Those wishing to receive the newsletter should contact the Enquiries Centre, Environment Canada, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0H3.

PETROLEUM INDUSTRY GETS GOOD MARKS

According to a recently-released federal government report, discharges of contaminants into Canadian waterways from petroleum industry sources decreased by more than 75 percent between 1972 and 1984. Authors of the report, entitled *Environmental Status Report for the Canadian Petroleum Refining Industry, 1983-1984*, attributed the reduction in pollution primarily to the petroleum industry's efforts to meet federal and provincial regulations.

The report shows that from 1972 to 1983, there were significant reductions in discharges of all pollutants for which measurements were made, including oil and grease, total suspended solids, phenols, sulphide, and ammonia-nitrogen. Reductions during the period were the result of a drop in the volume of oil refined (about 20 percent) and of the industry's continued efforts to meet and exceed regulatory requirements. The latter included upgrading and replacement of existing facilities and the installation of efficient treatment systems at new refineries.

Commenting on the report, federal environment minister Tom McMillan noted that "the record of the petroleum industry, though imperfect, has traditionally been better than that of most others" . . . and that . . . "this report provides cause for both satisfaction and renewed commitment to improve the overall record." McMillan went on to say that the petroleum industry is developing an environmentally sound business approach which he hoped other resource industries would follow.

NEW UNDERGROUND TANK GUIDES

The American Petroleum Institute (API) has released a number of bulletins dealing with underground petroleum storage tanks.

Removal and Disposal of Used Underground Petroleum Storage Tanks, 1987 (order number 804-16040) replaces API's Bulletin #1604 *Recommended Practice for Abandonment or Removal of Used Underground Service Station Tanks, 1981*.

Installation of Underground Petroleum Product Storage Systems, 1987 (order No. 804-16150).

Interior Lining of Underground Storage Tanks, 1987 (order No. 804-16320).

Cathodic Protection of Underground Petroleum Storage Tanks and Piping Systems, 1987 (order No. 804-16320).

Management of Underground Petroleum Products Storage Systems at Marketing and Distribution Facilities, 1987 (order No. 804-16350).

All of the above are available from the American Petroleum Institute, Publications and Distribution Section, 1220 L Street Northwest, Washington, D.C. 20005, U.S.A., at a cost of \$10 (US) per item for members or \$12 (US) per item for non-members.

PUBLICATIONS

Protection of Public Water Supplies from Ground Water Contamination. Edited by W.A. Pettyjohn, published by Noyes Data Corp., 1987, Park Ridge, New Jersey, U.S.A., 177 pages, \$36.00 (US).

Environmental Ethics for Engineers. Authored by Alastair S. Gunn and P. Aarne Vesilind, published by Lewis Publishers Inc., 1986, Chelsea, Michigan, U.S.A., 153 pages, \$18.95 (US).

The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS) has begun distributing teach-yourself videodex packages that deal with industrial safety. The packages incorporate easy-to-understand text and animated colour illustrations designed for micro-computer screens. Presentations come in the form of 5-1/2 inch floppy discs. Among a number of topics presently available are presentations on asbestos, excavation safety, and workplace chemicals. Users require an IBM PC, or compatible, an EGA or PCD6 graphics board and Image Access software. For further information contact the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, 250 Main Street East, Hamilton, Ontario L8N 1H6 or telephone 1-800-263-8276 (toll-free).

The 1987 edition of *Who's Who in Environmental Engineering* provides a complete listing of American environmental engineers. Published by the American Academy of Environmental Engineers, the book includes lists organized by occupation including air pollution control, public health, industrial hygiene, radiation protection, solid waste management, and wastewater engineering. Copies may be obtained at a cost of \$50.00 (US) from the American Academy of Environmental Engineers, 132 Holiday Court, Annapolis, Maryland 214101, U.S.A.

O'CONNOR UPDATE



John Elton, a hydrogeologist experienced in groundwater supply development, dewatering, environmental impact assessments, and groundwater contamination, has joined O'Connor Associates in Calgary. His experience strengthens the firm's capabilities in the development of regional water supply and the protection of groundwater resources.

NOT ON OUR MAILING LIST?

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