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19 Silicon Valley sites listed for toxic waste cleanup

By Alan Cline
Examiner staff writer

The Environmental Protection Agency calls it a symbol of "full commitment."

But to advocates for a safer environment in Silicon Valley, the latest list of danger zones on the government's Superfund list isn't worth much more than the paper it's printed on.

The EPA yesterday announced plans to place 41 hazardous waste sites in California on the federal Superfund cleanup list, including 19 Silicon Valley sites where chemicals used by firms there have leaked from underground tanks.

The list of potential candidates also includes the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory and several Army bases in the Sacramento area.

The additions came in the EPA's annual update of the Superfund Program and make a total of 785 hazardous waste sites in the United States

that the government has identified as needing immediate cleanup.

The Silicon Valley firms, which include IBM, Fairchild Camera and Hewlett-Packard, use solvents that leak from underground storage tanks. The solvents have caused cancers in test animals.

EPA Regional Administrator Judith E. Ayres said wells in which drinking water was polluted have been capped.

She said the additions show her agency's "full commitment" to making hazardous waste the EPA's No. 1 priority.

Peninsula activists saw the action, which could make the private firms eligible for public funds, as something quite different.

Ted Smith, chairman of the Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition, said the California additions constitute a "paper victory."

The new designations, he said, give Santa Clara County the dubious honor

of having more sites on the Superfund list than any county in the nation.

Peter Cervantes-Gautschi, business manager of the Santa Clara County Central Labor Council, one of the groups battling to clean up toxic spills in the valley, said the coalition was aware of 141 problem sites.

"We are aware that 19 is more than zero," he said, "but it's a hell of a lot less than 141."

Both he and Smith said the measure of EPA's real commitment will come in a pending Senate vote on legislation reauthorizing the Superfund for five more years.

The House already has adopted a measure that provides \$10 billion in cleanup funds. The Senate bill contains \$7.5 billion.

Both measures are opposed by the Reagan administration and the chemical and oil industries, which finance the Superfund treasury through a tax on their products.

The list of 244 sites across the na-

tion was first released two weeks ago in Washington by a congressman who charged that the EPA was "dragging its feet" in a political move to keep Congress from passing an expanded Superfund bill.

Ayres said, "We want the dumps cleaned up... We want the polluters to pay... We shall stabilize these waste sites... We shall prevent pollution from reaching ground water."

EPA is anticipating \$620 million for this fiscal year's Superfund program, she said.

Ayres called the site designation the first step in a strenuous rule-making process. She noted, however, that her agency had no authority to order a cleanup of polluted government areas, but that the lists at least highlight the problem.

The updated list includes the Livermore lab, operated by the University of California under contract with the

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Toxic waste sites

The EPA has added the following Silicon Valley companies to its Superfund list:

1. Advanced Micro Devices, Sunnyvale
2. Applied Materials, Santa Clara
3. Fairchild Camera & Instrument Corp., South San Jose
4. Fairchild Camera & Instrument Corp., Mountain View
5. Hewlett-Packard, Palo Alto
6. IBM Corp., San Jose
7. Intel Corp., San Jose
8. Intel Corp., Santa Clara
9. Intel Magnetics, Santa Clara
10. Lorentz Barrel & Drum, San Jose
11. Monolithic Memories, Sunnyvale
12. National Semiconductor Corp., Santa Clara
13. Precision Monolithic Inc., Santa Clara
14. Raytheon Corp., Mountain View
15. Signetics Inc., Sunnyvale
16. Teledyne Semiconductor, Mountain View
17. Van Waters & Rogers Inc., San Jose
18. Westinghouse Electrical Corp., Sunnyvale
19. Zococon Corp./Rhone-Poulenc Inc., East Palo Alto

Examiner chart

Savio speaks freely of new cause as he marks FSM birthday

By Lynn Ludlow and George Frost
Examiner staff writers

tion of students invaded Mississippi to register black voters in the tense summer of 1964. When he compared it to



19 Silicon Valley companies on EPA's waste cleanup list

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bestos dump and six sites in Hawaii, where parts of the water supply for the south central part of the island of Oahu may have been contaminated by low levels of pesticides used in pineapple fields.

The report on Livermore said abandoned waste pits on the site contained chloroform and organic solvents that leaked into private off-site wells.

Avres said more than 400 military facilities have been identified as potential hazardous waste problems, "and we feel they are just as significant" as the privately owned areas.

She said in the four years since the Superfund was initiated EPA completed preliminary cleanup assessments on more than 10,000 potential hazardous waste sites throughout the country while field inspections have been conducted at more than 3,500.

EPA contemplates an eventual Superfund list of between 1,400 and 2,200 sites, "so we are probably somewhere near the midway point" in assembling the Superfund list, she said.

Harry Saraydarian, the regional director of EPA's toxic and waste management division, acknowledged that the number of sites actually cleaned up and dropped from the Superfund list was in the "teens."

He said it can take up to 18 months at most sites to determine where the contamination is moving. He estimated 80 percent of a cleanup effort is devoted to technical issues and the rest devoted to bureaucratic process.

Earlier this week, four major semi-

conductor trade associations unveiled a \$100,000, six-month campaign to get more "clear" information to the public on how industry is dealing with the growing number of serious toxic waste sites in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties.

The key purpose of the Industry Clean Water Task Force, which is funded by about 40 Silicon Valley high-technology companies that have toxic waste sites, is "to represent industry to government and citizen groups," said Peter B. Giles, task force spokesman.

"If you look at the information provided to the public, we think it's very confusing," said Giles yesterday at a Palo Alto news conference announcing the new organization. "The public must be kept better informed."

Labor's Cervantes-Gautschi said he considered the program "a public relations thing for the industry."

Mexican firms in money trouble

MEXICO CITY (UPI) — The Mexican Stock Market announced yesterday that 23 national and transnational companies are suffering critical financial situations.

A statement from the stock market said 23 companies, including the powerful business association, the Alfa Group, had suffered tremendous losses during the economic crisis that has prohibited them from making payments on their debts.