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San Francisco Chronicle

JUN 20 1984

Big Turnout in Silicon Valley

Angry Meeting on Toxic Leak

By George Williamson

High levels of toxic chemicals leaking from electronics firms into residential wells in Silicon Valley brought more than 100 worried and angry residents to a Sunnyvale church last night.

The night's most frightening words came from Mountain View housewife Bonnie Jones. She had just learned her backyard well water — which her family of five has been drinking for 4½ years — contains an extraordinary amount of TCE (trichloroethylene).

TCE can cause a variety of serious health problems to humans and has been linked to cancer in laboratory animals.

Jones said tests of samples from her well showed her water contained 1100 parts of TCE per billion parts of water.

Earlier, Dr. J. E. Cone of San Francisco General Hospital's Occupational Health Clinic, had told the

gathering that so little is known about TCE's long-range effects that even one part per billion would worry him.

Governmental and electronics industry agencies have waffled about what might be a safe TCE level, with the Environmental Protection Agency saying once that as much as 200 parts per billion might be acceptable.

Jones said she has lately been suffering symptoms much like those Cone said might afflict TCE victims. "I've been dizzy, disoriented, I feel like I can't think straight and doctors haven't known what was causing it," she said.

She added that her husband has been under treatment for a strange bladder and kidney infection, and one of her three children has recently suffered a number of asthma attacks.

Jones said she was additionally angered because she had to call the unnamed county agency that is sup-

posed to be testing local wells to learn the results of her well's

She said the agency representative told her the results of 120 Mountain View wells would be routinely sent out by mail and probably arrive early next week.

To applause from a sympathetic audience, Jones said, "I'm really getting worried now. I don't know what can be done but, hopefully working together, we can find out something."

Last night's meeting at Mark's Lutheran Church was called by the Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition. Those attending suggested a variety of proposed actions, including staging massive street demonstrations.

Coalition chairman Ted Smith, an attorney, won agreement from the audience that they should spend the next week or two mulling over their own ideas for action, then meet again with an even bigger group.