

GOP Lambasted Over Toxic Waste

Washington

A coalition of environmental groups charged yesterday that the Reagan administration is stalling on cleaning up toxic waste dumps because Republicans do not want to jeopardize campaign contributions from polluters.

Officials of the National Campaign Against Toxic Hazards made the accusation at a news conference after what they described as a "very disappointing" meeting with William Ruckelshaus, head of the Environmental Protection Agency.

"Mr. Ruckelshaus is well-intentioned and a good administrator, but his hands appear to be tied by the White House," said John O'Connor, coordinator of the coalition.

"It appears to us that Mr. Ruckelshaus has neither the money, legal authority nor leadership to get the job done."

O'Connor said Ruckelshaus declined to endorse legislation pending in Congress that would boost from \$1.6 billion to \$9 billion the amount available in the so-called Superfund to clean up chemical pollution around the country.

"Someone is keeping him from coming out publicly for the dollar amount," O'Connor said. "Someone's telling him — whether it's the Office of Management and Budget or the White House, we don't know."

"We suspect the Republican Party needs to raise money from these (polluting) industries."

Ted Smith of San Jose, an official of the Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition, said: "It is business as usual in this administration. The industrial polluters and the administration are still in bed together."

"I thought he (Ruckelshaus) would at least play politics and give us a few concessions, but he didn't even do that," Smith added.

Smith said 120 underground chemical leaks, spills and discharges have occurred in the San Francisco Bay area as of May 25, affecting San Jose, Palo Alto, Mountain View, Sunnyvale, Milpitas, Mor-



1977 Telephone

JOHN O'CONNOR
The coalition coordinator

Other Bay Area cities, including Santa Clara and Santa Cruz, are affected by spreading problems of chemical spills, Smith said.

Many, but not all, of the leaks and spills are directly related to the high-tech industry of Silicon Valley. Chemicals seep deep into the ground, infiltrate water systems and pass from one water supply to another.

The California coalition is asking the EPA to clean up 20 spill sites in the San Jose area at the companies' expense, relocate affected residents, provide screening for those living near toxic sites and medical care for those affected, and test air and water in spill areas.

The EPA's Dick Hoffmann said, "The charges are utter nonsense and have no basis in fact. No such accusations or issues were raised in the meeting this morning."

Hoffmann said Ruckelshaus told coalition representatives at the 80-minute meeting that, although he supports reauthorization of the Superfund, he does not favor the pending legislation because he believes that more studies are needed to pinpoint exactly how much money is needed to clean up toxic waste

Toxic Safety Controls Weak, GAO Reports

Washington

The public is inadequately protected from the dangers of hazardous chemicals, the General Accounting Office said yesterday.

The GAO, an investigative arm of Congress, made public two reports, one dealing with substances already on the market, the other with newly developed chemicals. The reports said that the Environmental Protection Agency needs more resources to carry out the Toxic Substances Control Act of 1976 and that the act itself has loopholes that must be revised.

The accounting office said that of the nearly 60,000 chemicals already being sold, the EPA has regulated only four and is conducting "priority reviews" of two others to determine whether they constitute an unreasonable risk to health and the environment.

The agency has decided that 22 other chemicals must be tested for health and environmental effects, but it has not yet set the rules for the testing, the GAO reported.

The delay in setting these rules results from the limited staff and budget, agency officials said.

The accounting office also found that the environmental agency's review of chemicals before they were sold to the public was "limited in scope."

Senator David Durenberger, R-Minn., said administration of the toxic substances law had been hindered "by bureaucratic delays (and) legal weaknesses."

Durenberger, chairman of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee's subcommittee on toxic substances, said he plans to introduce major amendments to the law this year to eliminate "ambiguities and loopholes."

New York Times

U.S.-Indonesia Pact

Washington

The United States and Indonesia yesterday renewed a 1978 accord for cooperation in scientific re-

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