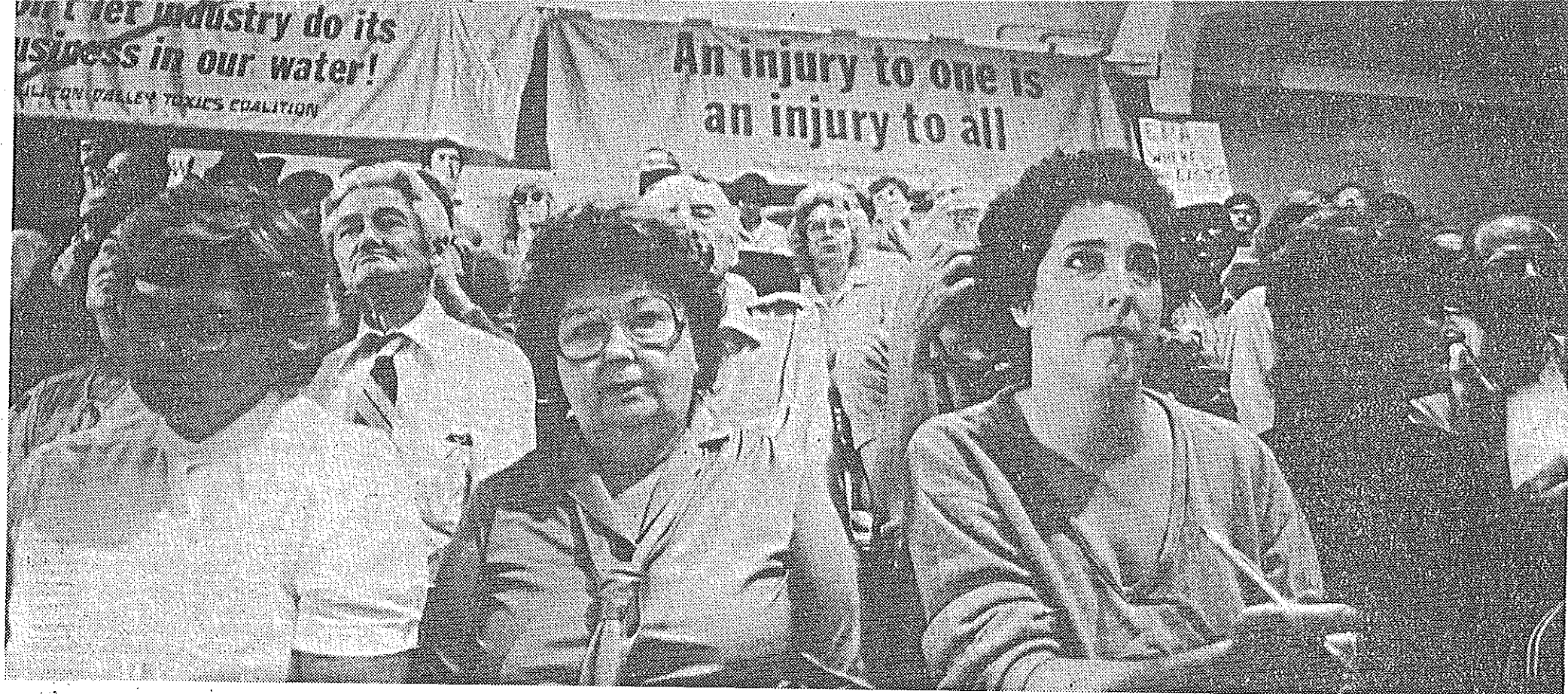


3A8



A packed assembly hall at San Jose High School Wednesday heard what the Environmental Protection Agency is doing to clean up toxic spills in the Santa Clara Valley. Times Tribune staff photos by Victor Volta



Ted Smith ... gives list of demands.

EPA explains what it's doing

By Ann Gibbons
Times Tribune staff 8/17/84

More than 250 people jammed an auditorium in San Jose Thursday night to find out what the Environmental Protection Agency is doing to clean up toxic chemicals and to protect their drinking water.

Many of the people were emotional and blamed the EPA for being too slow to respond to the problem of toxic chemicals contaminating the soil and ground water in the Santa Clara Valley.

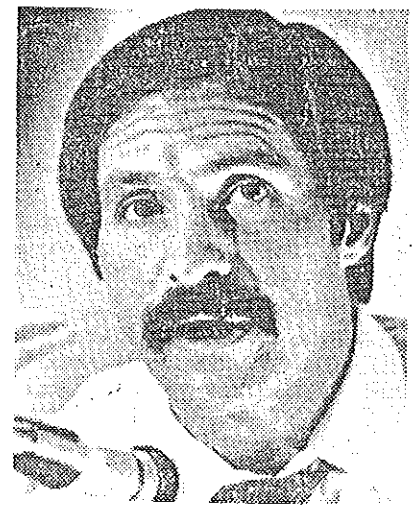
"EPA stands for Environmental Protection Agency," said Barbara Fenster, who lives near the IBM plant in San Jose where toxic solvents have contaminated public drinking water supplies. "I'd be glad to know what part of the valley the EPA protects, because it sure isn't drinking water."

Michael Belliveau of Citizens for a Better Environment said the EPA has known about toxic contamination in the valley since 1979 but has waited until this year to use its authority to require the cleanup of the toxic chemicals.

EPA official Harry Seraydarian, however, outlined the work the federal agency has done this summer to help local, regional and state agencies to clean up the contamination found at more than 90 sites in the valley.

The agency's most significant action has been to propose that between 13 and 20 contaminated sites in Santa Clara Valley be eligible for the government's Superfund money to clean up the chemicals.

The San Francisco Regional of-
Please see EPA, Page B-3



Harry Seraydarian ... defends EPA's work.

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Barbara Fenster of San Jose criticizes the Environmental Protection Agency during Thursday night's Silicon Valley Toxic Co-

Times Tribune staff photo by Victoria J. Voigt

alition meeting at San Jose High School for not paying enough attention to the drinking water problems.



Times Tribune staff photo by Victor J. Voigt

Pat Lamborn, the director of the Santa Clara Center for Occupational Safety and Health called on the Environmental Protection Agency to be more stringent in its investigations.

EPA

Continued from B-1

office of the EPA advised the agency to consider the sites from Palo Alto to San Jose as one large area instead of as individual sites that should be cleaned up separately. Serradarian declined to release the locations of the sites until they are published in the Federal Register in October.

The EPA also has asked the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta, Ga., to study residents of neighborhoods in the valley where drinking water supplies have been contaminated. The center has responded that it is "interested" in doing such an epidemiological study but needs more information from the regional EPA and the state Department of Health Services, said Serradarian, who is director of the toxics and waste management division in the western region office of the EPA.

Ted Smith, chairman of the Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition, said the EPA's recommendation to include the Santa Clara Valley sites on the Superfund list was a "good first step — but only a drop in the bucket."

The coalition, with the vocal approval of members of the audience, called upon the EPA to take the following steps next:

- Notify the community and workers in industries when a site with toxic contamination has been found near their homes or work. The EPA also should tell people the health risk posed by the contamination.
 - Test tap water (as opposed to well water) for toxic contamination.
 - Require the immediate cleanup of toxic spills by specific deadlines.
 - Start health screening for victims exposed to toxic chemicals at work or in their drinking water. Many of the people at the meeting, in particular, called for medical tests of people exposed to the chemicals.
- Serradarian, responding to the demands, said the EPA is meeting with city managers and regional officials to draft a mailing list of people living or working near toxic contamination sites. He said he hoped to develop the mailing list by early October.
- The EPA is at work now with other agencies to draft deadlines by which companies must contain and begin the clean up of contamination.

... .. Denigration didn't in itself, informant.