

Watchdogs pan DNR; press for environmental boss

By TOM LONERGAN

A panel of local government officials from southeast Michigan wants Gov. William Milliken to appoint an "environmental master" to direct cleanup of contaminated ground water sites in the seven-county region.

Members of the Arawake Water Quality Board (AWQB), part of the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG), expressed little confidence during an emergency meeting last week in the Michigan Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) ability to resolve the problem.

The AWQB has no legal power but acts as a state-designated watchdog agency on water quality.

EARLIER THIS month, DNR released a list of more than 250 locations in the state known to have contaminated groundwater.

The list included two landfills in Avon Township and one in Troy that have polluted the groundwater. An additional five landfills in Avon were suspected of polluting the groundwater.

In Wayne County, the polluted list included a Standard Oil gas station in downtown Plymouth, where fuel oil has leaked into the groundwater. A landfill in Canton Township is suspected of contaminating the groundwater.

THE WATER quality board asked Milliken to search nationwide for an individual to direct cleanup of contaminated sites and pursue civil and criminal penalties against violators.

The "environmental master" would play a similar role that federal court-appointed experts did in the pollution cases involving the city of Detroit's sewage treatment plant.

"The DNR has maintained an isolated, closed-door process on environmental protection strategy," said James

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— James Seeterlin, Waterford Township

Seeterlin, Waterford Township supervisor and AWQB chairman.

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The water quality panel also asked Milliken and Michigan Attorney General Frank Kelley to meet with local officials in southeast Michigan to discuss funding more environmental enforcement personnel "for rapid prosecution of violators."

That demand was pressed by Washington County Drain Commissioner Thomas Blessing, who said there has been "no emphasis on prosecution locally or at the state level."

"Until people understand that they won't be faced with just cleanup cost, but also criminal prosecution, I don't think it (chemical dumping in landfills and elsewhere) will ever be stopped."

BUT MAYOR Richard Cogger, of Lathrup Village, said he'd be concerned with an overkill on enforcement and prosecution.

"Ohio is concerned with getting as much Michigan business that's willing to fly across the border," he said, noting the neighboring state has more lenient environmental laws.

He called for state and federal funding research to develop ways of disposing toxic chemicals.

"I'm sure there's many businesses with toxic materials who have just put them in a drum," Cogger said, "because we haven't provided them with an out."

LOCAL OFFICIALS from Livingston and Monroe counties rapped DNR for failure to advise them about the contamination problems.

"This very report the DNR put out is an indictment of the DNR," a township supervisor in Livingston County said.

James Miller of DNR's environmental enforcement division called the contamination problem "almost overwhelming."

"There's very little likelihood that we can attack the whole list immediately," he said. "The list was outdated before it was published. That's how fast the information came in."

Miller said the polluted sites listed in the DNR's report were based on known physical evidence while the suspected list was "overly conservative."

Virtually all landfills were listed as suspected contaminant sites, Miller said.

ON PRIORITIES, Miller said contaminated sites where toxic chemicals

have been dumped would be addressed first.

"We don't feel salt spills or discharges that involve petroleum products (as in Plymouth) are as urgent,"

Asked about enforcement, Miller said, "We're talking about criminal actions, civil actions and additional administrative actions."

He said three state laws covering dumping, transporting dangerous chemicals and landfills carry penalties ranging from \$1,000 to \$25,000 and provide for jail terms.

The environmental enforcement division has a staff of 20.

WHILE CALLING the pollution crisis nothing new, State Rep. Alice Tomblouin, D-Rochester, said a new state law on disposal of hazardous wastes should lead to closer regulation so

"things end up where they're supposed to go."

The law, which Rep. Tomblouin sponsored, takes effect Jan. 1.

She said the new law could allow industry to establish regulated hazardous dump sites in the state. There is "antipathy" toward the state's operating a disposal site, she said.

Tomblouin said Michigan is one of the four most toxic waste contaminated states in the country, and Oakland County was one of the three worst contaminated counties.

BUT LEROY Volberding, director of Human Services for Oakland County, said the groundwater is salvageable.

He referred to alarmist concerns about writing off the groundwater in southeast Michigan. I don't know what that means.

Stress

Creative or destructive, it's what the boss makes of it

'Informal interpersonal relationships are an important dimension of an employee's life; they are a vital support system, but they can also generate great demands in the form of personality conflicts or the unpleasant results if the employee deviates from expected behavior.'

Organizational stress may be either good or bad.

Properly managed, stress may result in creative performance. Badly managed, it may result in illness or employee turnover.

And many popular ideas about stress are wrong, say two authorities in an article in Human Resource Management, quarterly publication of the University of Michigan Graduate School of Business Administration.

James C. Quick, assistant professor of organizational behavior and management at the University of Texas-Arlington, and Jonathan D. Quick, family medicine resident at Duke University, point out, for example, that laborers have been found to have more stress-related problems than executives.

And there is evidence that middle-level executives may be more susceptible to "executive heart attack" than their superiors in the "high pressure" jobs at the top.

STRESS CAN be expensive to an organization, the authors point out. When an over-stressed employee walks out the door or dies of a heart attack, the bottom line costs may be \$3,500 to replace each non-exempt employee who quits, \$50,000 to replace a key manager, and \$600,000 to replace the president.

They identify four groups of factors which create stress at work:

• **Role Factors:** Supervisors, colleagues, and subordinates have expectations regarding the behavior of an employee at work. These expectations place demands upon the person to behave in particular ways and lead to a moderate level of stress.

"This stress level increases noticeably if the expectations are ambiguous, confusing, or unclear. . . . A clearly-defined role in which the expectations are specific and consistent generates less stress than an ill-defined role which can be as source of high stress levels."

• **Job Factors:** Decades ago, jobs were viewed as static, relatively rigid positions within the organization's task and authority structure; more recently, they are viewed as dynamic structural units amenable to modification and change.

The variety of tasks incorporated into the job, the amount and quality of feedback regarding performance on the job, the absence of hygienic job fac-

tors, and/or the lack of autonomy in accomplishing various job tasks are potential sources of stress.

• **PERFORMANCE appraisal,** the process intended to assess how effectively the employee is utilizing his or her resources and capabilities in meeting job demands is a specific example of job-factor stress. . . .

"The evaluation process is particularly stressful because the evaluation is often the basis upon which pay, bonus, promotion, termination, and transfer decisions are made."

The authors say that particularly stressful jobs are those of laborers, administrators, painters, secretaries, and office managers; much less stressful are the jobs of stockholders, craftsmen, university professors, and autoneers.

• **Physical Factors:** "There are a great variety of physical factors which place demands upon the individual. For the employee who works in an office setting, high noise levels, excessive vibrations, air currents, extreme temperatures, or floods may not appear to be sources of stress; but construction

workers, laborers, miners, and outdoor painters may be very aware of them."

"Such physical factors may be more threatening than all job factors and physical factors combined for office employees. . . . Yet it would be unrealistic to ignore the potential for stress generated by physical factors in office or manufacturing settings completely."

• **Interpersonal Factors:** "Informal interpersonal relationships are an important dimension of an employee's life; they are a vital support system, but they can also generate great demands in the form of personality conflicts or the unpleasant results if the employee deviates from expected behavior. Examples of this kind of stress would be the silencing of a West Point cadet or the exclusion of an employee from a lunch group for efforts to gain a promotion."

A stressful experience, the authors explain, triggers the body's "fight-or-flight" response, which incurs an increase in heart rate, respiration, muscle tension, adrenal levels in the blood and increased blood pressure.

Tour agency to make refunds

Elliott Tours Inc. of Farmington Hills has agreed to pay refunds to 30 customers as the result of customer complaints that the travel agency failed to abide by its advertisements.

Elliott also will pay \$1,500 to the Michigan attorney general's office for an investigation.

The travel agency, with offices in Birmingham, Southfield, Livonia and Westland, agreed this month to pay refunds ranging from \$30 to \$800.

According to a statement from the attorney general's office, Elliott will comply with an "assurance of discontin-

uance" filed in Ingham County Circuit Court earlier this month.

THE COMPANY has agreed to:

- Confirm hotel reservations before chartering tours and no longer send tours to hotels which overbook.
- Revise its brochures to warn passengers of possible flight delays and inform tour participants if the agency receives advance notice of a flight delay.
- Rectify or refund any misstatements in travel brochures are not misleading.
- Make prompt refunds, in accordance with contract or Civil Aeronau-

tions Board regulations. When the amount refunded depends on how far in advance a cancellation is made, the travel agency will begin counting from the day it receives oral cancellation.

ASSURANCES of discontinuance are legally binding agreements under the state Consumer Protection Act.

In signing the agreement, Elliott Tours does not acknowledge "any wrongdoing or misconduct," according to the attorney general's office, but "agrees to henceforth comply with all provisions of the law."

Minimum wage up, burger bump next?

A 20 cent increase in the minimum wage to \$3.10 per hour will take effect Tuesday.

It will affect "hundreds of thousands" of employees statewide, "a good majority" of whom work for restaurants and other small businesses, said a spokeswoman for the Michigan Department of Labor.

The increase is the third annual hike in the minimum wage since 1978. In 1981, the minimum wage will go up another 25 cents to \$3.35.

Before the U.S. Congress and Michigan Legislature approved minimum wage increases in 1977, the rate was \$2.30 an hour. Both state and federal laws require the same rate.

WHILE THE increases were intended to "fall in line with increases in the cost of living," Linda Howe, of the state labor department's wage-hour division, admits they've fallen short.

"I seriously doubt it's going to stay with the cost-of-living increase," she said. "No way it can."

Prices in the Detroit area through November were 14.5 percent higher than a year before, according to the federal government's consumer price index.

The latest hike in the minimum wage is nearly 7 percent. The increase for 1981 will be 8 percent.

Increases after 1981 will require new legislation to pass both Congress and the state legislature.

ONLY THOSE businesses with gross revenues under \$275,000 a year are exempted from paying the minimum wage, according to Darlene Layman of the federal government's wage-hour information office.

However, both state and federal laws allow restaurants to deduct "tip credit" from waitresses' and waiters' wages.

Restaurants who paid waitresses at least \$2.18 an hour, during 1979 were not violating the law, Howe said, as long as tips made up the 72 cents an hour difference.

The new "base rate" for waitresses in 1980 will be \$2.33.

Federal law allows employers to deduct a 40 percent tip credit, but Layman said businesses are advised to adhere to the stricter 25 percent deduction the state allows.

THE FEDERAL minimum wage law covers workers of all ages, while the state law covers those 18 and older who work for a business with at least two employees.

The state coverage requirement changed last April. As a result, "We picked up a lot of employers," Howe said.

Previously, businesses with four or fewer employees were exempted. Federal law allows a business to pay a full-time high school or college student 85 percent of the minimum wage or \$2.64 an hour.

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