

Wednesday, April 28, 1982

P.18175

[OPTS-42010; TSH-FRL 2081-6]

Hexachloroethane; Response to the Interagency Testing Committee

AGENCY: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: This notice constitutes EPA's response to the Interagency Testing Committee's recommendation that EPA require environmental effects testing of hexachloroethane (HCE) under section 4(a) of the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA). EPA is not initiating rulemaking under section 4(a) to require further effects testing of HCE because, given the small amounts of the substance which will be released to the environment, there is no basis for believing that the compound may present an unreasonable risk. Regulatory action is already in progress under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) to control the disposal of HCE-containing wastes.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Douglas G. Bannerman, Acting Director, Industry Assistance Office (TS-799), Office of Pesticides and Toxic Substances, Environmental Protection Agency, 401 M St. SW., Washington, D.C., 20460, Toll Free: (800-424-9065), In Washington, D.C.: (554-1404), Outside the USA: (Operator-202-554-1404).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background

Section 4(e) of TSCA (sec. 4(a); Pub. L. 94-469, 90 Stat. 2003; 15 U.S.C. 2601 et seq.) established an Interagency Testing Committee (ITC) to recommend a list of chemicals for EPA to consider for promulgation of testing rules under section 4(a) of the Act. The ITC may designate substances for priority consideration by EPA. TSCA requires EPA to respond within twelve months of the date a substance is recommended for priority response by initiating rulemaking under section 4(a) or by publishing reasons in the Federal Register for not initiating rulemaking.

The ITC designated hexachloroethane (HCE) for priority consideration in its Eighth Report, published in the Federal Register of May 22, 1981 (46 FR 28138), recommending that it be tested for the following environmental effects: chemical fate, terrestrial plant uptake and toxicity, bioaccumulation, microbial

5/11

toxicity, avian toxicity, toxicity to terrestrial invertebrates, chronic toxicity to fish and aquatic invertebrates.

The ITC's recommendations were based on annual production and importation figures between 4 and 41 million pounds, and the opportunity for substantial environmental release during use and disposal of HCE-containing materials. Other factors included evidence of acute toxicity to aquatic organisms at concentrations below 1 ppm HCE and a lack of information concerning chemical fate, toxicity to other organisms, and effects of chronic exposure.

This notice provides EPA's response to the ITC's designation of HCE for testing.

II. Decision Not to Test

EPA has decided that section 4 testing of HCE is not warranted at this time based on limited exposure and release of HCE to the environment, and on regulatory action already in progress under RCRA.

There are currently two sources of HCE in the U.S.: (1) Imports and (2) HCE-containing hex-wastes resulting from the production of chlorinated hydrocarbons. In 1980, imports accounted for 28 percent and hex-wastes for 74 percent of the approximately 11 million-pound volume of HCE in the U.S. Approximately 90-98 percent of the imported HCE is used in the manufacture of U.S. Army smoke munitions and aluminum industry degassing pellets. The majority of the HCE in these products is destroyed during the use of the products (estimated >91 percent and >99 percent respectively). Very little HCE would be expected to be released to the environment through these uses. The military is presently seeking a substitute for HCE and plans to discontinue its use of the chemical.

The waste streams, i.e., hex-wastes, from the production of certain chlorinated hydrocarbons typically contain 4-15 percent HCE. The HCE is not recovered from the hex-wastes, but is disposed by various methods. Over the last 10 years, disposal practices for hex-waste have shifted from landfill operations to incineration. In 1981, 82 percent of the hex-wastes will be disposed of by incineration, 18 percent by deepwell injection and less than 1 percent by landfill operations. The incinerators used for this purpose reportedly achieve 99.99 percent destruction efficiency. Some hex-wastes also contain PCBs at levels exceeding 50 ppm and thus must be handled according to the regulations governing PCBs under TSCA. These regulations

include disposal in EPA-approved incinerators (99.9999 percent destruction efficiency), secured landfills, or high-efficiency boilers. In addition, regulatory action under RCRA is being directed toward the proper disposal of HCE-containing wastes. HCE and hex-waste streams are listed as hazardous wastes under RCRA, 40 CFR Part 261.

HCE is also present as an intermediate in the production of chlorofluorocarbons. However, the HCE is generated and entirely consumed during the manufacturing process. A chlorofluorocarbon industry source estimates a release of 7 tons of HCE per year (1) from emissions to the atmosphere during the storage of chlorinated hydrocarbons containing HCE and (2) from the disposal of materials generated through sampling, equipment cleaning operations, etc.

In light of current uses and disposal practices, and regulatory action taken under RCRA, it is anticipated that only small quantities of HCE will be released to the environment. Therefore, there is no basis for believing that the compound may present an unreasonable risk to the environment. EPA has, therefore, decided that section 4 testing of hexachloroethane is not warranted at this time. If monitoring data under RCRA or other data indicate an increase in release or exposure to HCE, this decision not to require testing may be reconsidered at that time.

III. Public Record

EPA has established a public record for this testing decision (docket number OPTS-42010) which is available for inspection in the OPTS Reading Room from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on working days in Rm. E-107, 401 M St. SW., Washington, D.C., 20460. This record includes basic information considered by the Agency in developing this decision. The Agency will supplement the record with additional relevant information as it is received. The record includes the following information:

1. Federal Register notice containing the designation of hexachloroethane to the Priority List.
2. Communications (public, intra-agency, and interagency):
 - a. Memoranda and letters.
 - b. Contact reports of telephone conversations.
 - c. Meetings.
3. Public comments on the ITC report.
4. Published and unpublished data.

Dated: April 22, 1982.

Anne M. Gorsuch,
Administrator.

[FR Doc. 82-11576 Filed 4-27-82; 8:45 am]
BILLING CODE 6530-50-M