

-THE GLOBE AND MAIL, THURSDAY, JULY 2, 1981 15

Dump cleanup not sufficient, brief contends

By RAE TYSON

Special to The Globe and Mail

BUFFALO — An agreement to clean up a huge chemical dump is unworkable and will result in the continued contamination of the Niagara River and Lake Ontario, environmental groups charge in papers filed this week in U.S. District Court.

The U.S. and Canadian groups say the Hooker Chemical Co. dump north of Niagara Falls, N.Y., contains a significant quantity of dioxin, a highly poisonous industrial contaminant.

They say the only way to avoid further environmental damage is to remove the wastes and either bury them elsewhere or destroy them in an incinerator.

They warn that the drinking water of five million people could be contaminated to a degree increasing the risk of cancer.

The agreement in dispute would clean up the area but leave the waste in the present location.

The brief was filed by Pollution Probe of Toronto, Operation Clean-Niagara of Niagara-on-the-Lake, and the Ecumenical Task Force of Niagara Falls, N.Y., in response to a proposed settlement of suits against Hooker concerning the Hyde Park Boulevard chemical dump.

In an accompanying affidavit, Environment Canada scientist Douglas Hallett says the dump may contain more dioxin (TCDD) than any other single location in the world.

Hooker used the dump for an estimated 80,000 tonnes of chemical waste, including the pesticide Mirex, polychlorinated biphenyls and trichlorophenol, between 1953 and 1976.

"According to our consultants, the program set forth in the agreement is absolutely not viable," the environmental groups conclude

in the brief, prepared by Buffalo attorney Barbara Morrison and Canadian Environmental Law Association attorney Toby Vigod.

Dr. Hallett, who reported the discovery of dioxin in Lake Ontario herring gulls last December, warns that the earlier findings are insignificant compared to the potential for future contamination.

He estimates that as yet no more than 300 grams of a possible ton in the dump have entered Lake Ontario.

Hydrogeologist E. Grant Anderson of Unionville, Ont., said in an accompanying document that "these chemicals will be removed from the dump in one of two ways: either by slowly bleaching out over the next, literally, thousands of years or by physically removing the entire dump."

