

# STATE OF ALASKA

DEPT. OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

WILLIAM A. EGAN, GOVERNOR

POUCH 0 — JUNEAU 99801

October 12, 1972

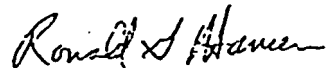
Mr. James P. Behlke  
Executive Assistant Director  
Public Services Branch  
Department of Ecology  
State of Washington  
Box 829  
Olympia, Washington 98501

Dear Mr. Behlke:

I am writing you about some information developed in working with Ketchikan Pulp Company at Ketchikan, Alaska. It appears that Ketchikan Pulp Company is planning barge and rail shipment of an unknown quantity of material in 8,000 gallon rail tank cars containing mercury-contaminated caustic sludge to the Georgia Pacific facility in Bellingham, Washington for ultimate disposal. Ketchikan Pulp Company in their use of caustic in their pulp making process has found a level of mercury contamination in the residual caustic sludge that is unacceptable for discharge in this location. They are therefore planning this shipment of contaminated sludge south to facilities in Bellingham for ultimate disposal.

I am providing this information to you for any action you wish to take in regard to this situation. Mr. Anderegg plans to see you later this month at the Pacific Northwest Pollution Control Council.

Sincerely yours,



Ronald G. Hansen, Chief  
Water Quality Control Section

November 9, 1972

State of  
Washington  
Department  
of Ecology



Mr. Ronald G. Hansen, Chief  
Water Quality Control Section  
Department of Environmental  
Conservation  
Pouch "0"  
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Mr. Hansen:

Thank you for your letter with the information about mercury contaminated sludge being shipped to Georgia Pacific in Bellingham.

Adjacent to their pulp mill in Bellingham, Georgia Pacific operates a chlorine and caustic soda production facility. A mercury cathode, used in the electrolytic decomposition process, is the source of trace quantities of mercury in the caustic end product. Apparently, this mercury contaminant gradually builds up in a caustic sludge residue within a wood pulping process facility.

According to Georgia Pacific, 25,000 gallons of this sludge was received from the Ketchikan Pulp Company in three tank cars during October. As the supplier of caustic, Georgia Pacific accepts the return of contaminated sludge for recovery of mercury. Georgia Pacific informed us that the shipment from Ketchikan was sludge that had accumulated since 1965, when Georgia Pacific became the caustic supplier for Ketchikan Pulp.

Considering the surveillance required to prevent water pollution by mercury, I certainly appreciated your letter with information about a possible source of this critical contaminant.

Sincerely,

  
James P. Behlke  
Executive Assistant Director  
Public Services Branch

JPB:BJ:dc

17/02