



Bulletin No. 9

May 28, 1982

Are Petrochemicals Safe?

Moot Science Court Rendeers Decision

During the Seventh Alaska Health Congress entitled "Energy, Health, and the Environment -- The Health Impact of Petrochemical Development", an exciting new forum □ a Moot Science Court - was employed to air the controversial issues related to human health and petrochemical development. Unlike a debate, the Moot Science Court provided a structure process in which advocates for each policy position framed questions objectively. The advocates presented their facts, followed by cross-examination. The evidence was studied by a panel of judges who were themselves scientists to narrow the issues to areas of basic agreement and disagreement. We present here the official findings of the Moot Science Court.

Judges: Professeur Louis Rey, Dr. Malcom Pike, Mr. Frank Flavin

Pro: Dr. William Gaffey, Dr. John Doull, Dr. Ted Loomis

Con: Dr. Anthony Robbins, Dr. Philip Landrigan, Dr. Samuel Epstein

Witnesses: Dr. Ruth Ruttenberg, Mr. Peter Weiner, Dr. Milton Clark

### DECISION OF THE JUDGES

The question "Are Petrochemicals Safe?" having come before this Moot Science Court, and the Court having heard the arguments both pro and con on said issue; now therefore the Court makes the following Findings and Recommendations:

### FINDINGS

1. Are petrochemicals safe:

Finding: No.

2. Does petrochemical development present substantial potential public health risks?

Finding: Yes, as is the case with other industrial products.

3. Do these potential risks extend to the public at large?

Finding: Yes, in the case of product mishandling, accidents and major disasters at both the plant and distribution level.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Petrochemicals are dangerous and must be treated as such.

2. There should be developed a monitoring system on the working population that includes the environmental and other known risk factors such as smoking.

3. The idea of a petrochemical indemnity fund is a good one and its development is recommended.

4. There should be no new petrochemicals manufactured with open and public toxicology.

5. The petrochemical industry should be obligated to supply complete studies including toxicology for all known animal carcinogens identified by the International Agency for Cancer Research.

6. Complete health research information for all petrochemical products to be developed should be made available on a confidential basis to all appropriate agencies.

7. Prior to product development the appropriate agencies and industry should agree to which information can be made available to the public and workers.

8. The Moot Science Court regrets that the DOW-SHELL group did not participate in these proceedings.

9. The Court is concerned that the proposal is site non-specific and does not address local and arctic conditions.

10. Government research and monitoring structures should be developed ahead of petrochemical development.

(Reported by Alaska Public Health Association, Health Congress Steering Committee)