



COALEX STATE INQUIRY REPORT - 345

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Steve Walz
Division Director
Department of Mines, Minerals & Energy
202 North 9th Street, 8th floor
Richmond, Virginia 23219

TOPIC: USE OF TAGGANTS IN EXPLOSIVES

INQUIRY: Please conduct a survey of the IMCC member states to determine if any of the states have studied the use of taggants (additives used to tag explosives and trace their origin), when the study was conducted and who performed the study.

SEARCH RESULTS

Nine IMCC member states responded to the telephone survey (Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma and Pennsylvania). None of the states require the use of taggants in explosives and none knew of studies that their state had conducted or was conducting. Only Illinois and Pennsylvania indicated having any discussion on taggants. However, these states concluded that taggants are too expensive and too difficult to use at this time.

Research in news files of LEXIS-NEXIS, retrieved two relevant articles describing a seminar held by the National Academy of Science and a study conducted by the National Research Council [NRC] on deterrents to the criminal use of explosive chemicals. A discussion of the use of taggants was part of these articles.

A search of the National Academy Press on the Internet yielded a summary of the NRC's study, "Containing the Threat from Illegal Bombings", which was published in March, 1998. Regarding taggants, the study concluded that taggants could "provide an additional tool to law enforcement in solving and prosecuting criminal cases"; however, "the costs of a tagging program do not currently appear to be justified on the basis of the potential benefits."

Contacting the Institute of Makers of Explosives [IME] yielded a copy of the statement on taggant issues presented by the Institute's president at the National Academy of Science's seminar that preceded NCR's study and a statement on IME's position on taggants. According to the IME, putting taggants in explosives is a "cost/benefit question". Instead of requiring the use of taggants in the manufacture of explosives, a greater emphasis should be placed on requiring greater security of stored explosives.



Researching federal and state legislation-related files in LEXIS-NEXIS retrieved a 1995 House Committee Report describing the need to fund a study on taggants.

A list of the sources used to research this inquiry appears below, followed by a list of attachments.

SOURCES

1. "CONTAINING THE THREAT FROM ILLEGAL BOMBINGS" may be ordered from National Academy of Science's National Academy Press:

Internet site: www.nap.edu
National Academy Press Book Store
2001 Wisconsin Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20007
Ph: 800-624-6242

2. Institute of Makers of Explosives

1120 19th Street, NW, Suite 310
Washington, DC 20036
Contact: Cindy Douglas
Ph: 202-429-9280 ext. 319

3. LEXIS-NEXIS

Energy Library - All News File
Legislation Library - various files

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Chemical Engineering, Vol. 105, No. 4, "Taggants Are No Match for Malicious Use of Explosives" by Sandra Roberts (April, 1998).
- B. Chemical Engineering, Vol. 104, No. 2, "D.C. Forum Discusses Taggant's Future" (February, 1997).
- C. "Containing the Threat from Illegal Bombings", National Academy Press, Washington, D.C. 1998 [Summary].
- D. Statement of J. Christopher Ronay, President, Institute of Makers of Explosives before the National Academy of Sciences Committee on Marking, Rendering Inert and Licensing of Explosive Materials; Taggant Issues (January 13, 1997).
- E. Committee Report on "Comprehensive Antiterrorism Act of 1995", House Rpt. 104-383, 104th Cong., 1st Sess. (December 5, 1995) [Excerpts].