

Gwich'in Council International

“Community Based Model for PCB Mitigation in the Arctic”

PROGRESS REPORT To the ACAP Steering Committee Meeting, Moscow, 22-23 September 2005.

1. Status of work.

The Gwich'in Council International (GCI) Community Based Model for PCB Mitigation in the Arctic project was accepted in principal at the ACAP Steering Committee (SC) meeting in the October 2004 SC meeting in Helsinki, Finland. At the ACAP Steering Committee meeting in Stockholm, Sweden, the SC confirmed support for the project, but no specific funding was authorized.

The Council of Athabascan Tribal Governments (CATG), acting as a technical arm of GCI, initiated the inventory phase of this project in June 2005 (with funding and technical assistance from the USEPA). CATG conducted on site inspections for obsolete electrical equipment in the following villages:

- Beaver, Alaska
- Venetie, Alaska
- Chalkyitsik, Alaska
- Fort Yukon, Alaska

During the inspection five obsolete electrical transformers were identified (3 in Beaver, AK and 2 in Venetie, AK). The transformers were located in a community solid waste dump site and adjacent to a local school. One of the transformers was punctured and there was evidence of leakage. CATG communicated the results of the inventory to the USEPA. Based on the results, the next step is to collect samples to determine the PCB content of the di-electric oil in the transformers.

No transformers were found in the villages of Chalkyitsik and Fort Yukon. A village outside of the Yukon Flats contacted CATG to inform us that they have approximately 15 obsolete transformers improperly discarded in their village.

2. Plans for future work.

CATG and the USEPA are currently finalizing plans to sample the di-electric oil and establish procedures for proper disposal of the transformers. The USEPA has committed funding for this phase of the project. We anticipate being able to collect samples this Fall. After collecting samples, we plan to package and transport the transformers to a USEPA licensed disposal facility as needed.

CATG plans to continue inspecting villages next summer to identify obsolete transformers. The following villages in Alaska will be included: Circle, Arctic Village, Birch Creek, Stevens Village, and Rampart. CATG has been in communication with Canadian Gwich'in villages to determine if future cooperation is feasible. We have been able to provide educational materials to the Gwich'in Canadians to help raise awareness about the hazards of PCB's and where they are found.

Financial status.

Funding for the village-based obsolete equipment inventory has been provided by the USEPA Indian General Assistance Program (IGAP). The USEPA has also committed to providing funding for sampling and disposal, as necessary, of the five identified transformers.