

## SEWER FEES FOR TOXICS

The City of Palo Alto instituted, on a pilot basis, a fee system for key toxic pollutants effective July 1, 1992. Depending on the results of the first several years of operation the program may be expanded to include all cities within the service area of the Regional Water Quality Control Plant. The pilot program was designed to collect relatively small amounts (in the range of 1% of the total sewer bill) to ensure that administrative, analytical and other program features were ironed out before using it to collect substantial sums.

Manufacturing and laboratory facilities that exceed a discharge of 25,000 gallons per day are covered by the program. These facilities paid fees for the year ending July 1, 1993 in amounts ranging from 0.2 to 15.3 percent of their total sewer bills. The facility paying 15.3 percent has recently installed a "zero discharge" system. The toxic pollutant fee range for the remaining facilities is 0.2 to 4.5 percent.

The language contained in the Palo Alto Utility Rate Schedule reads as follows:

"Any establishment discharging sewage in excess of 25,000 gallons per day...[shall pay] \$12,078 per 1,000 pounds of toxics. Toxics include [the] sum of chromium, copper, cyanide, lead, nickel, silver and zinc."