

Group fights to keep chloramine out of water

By Christine Morente

STAFF WRITER

Twelve San Mateo and Santa Clara county residents filed an injunction against the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission to stop using chloramine or at least provide a permanent filtration system for their homes.

The group, who call themselves the Concerned Citizens Against Chloramine, filed Friday at San Francisco City Hall, seeking unspecified damages.

"We feel at this point, the (SFPUC) are absolutely adamant that they're not going to take this stuff out of the water," said David Heran, a San Bruno resident. Chloramine aggravates his asthma, he said. "We have a group here with problems and health issues that are not going away."

Ever since chloramine — a combination of chlorine and ammonia — was added into the Hetch Hetchy water system, county residents have complained of rashes and respiratory problems. Many are staying away from the water.

"I've had an unbelievable proportion of problems with the water," said Menlo Park resident Denise Johnson-Kula, who also suffers from respiratory problems. Last year, she filed a similar complaint against the SFPUC, but her case was dis-

missed. "It's like living in a Third World country — going to the well, cleaning under your arms and that's it. The impact on my life is severe."

The group wants the SFPUC to stop putting in chloramine and start studying it through dermal and inhalant testing. Johnson-Kula and her group is waiting to hear back from the SFPUC.

SFPUC Spokesman Tony Winnicker said he hasn't read the claims yet, but will work with the city attorney to follow the case. He does maintain that chloramine is safe but takes their concerns seriously.

"There is a certain percentage of the population who have skin issues and people all over the country have been drinking water with chloramine for years," Winnicker said. "It's widely respected and researched by the Environmental Protection Agency, and the state Department of Health."

Anyone who is experiencing skin or respiratory problems or has questions is asked to call Johnson-Kula at (650) 328-0424.

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