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Serrani Would Prohibit PCB Use

Senator G.L. Gunther, 21st District, and Representative Thom Serrani, 144th District, have had a bill raised for hearing which would prohibit PCB'S (polychlorinate biphenyl or terphenyls) from use in the State of Connecticut after January 1, 1980.

The legislators said that there is serious concern over PCB's in our water systems and in the silt of our rivers. There is only one major industry in Connecticut that uses PCB's: there is no replacement at this time so immediate outlawing of the product is impossible at this time.

PCB's are heat-resistant compounds manufactured in the United States. At one time, they were used in a variety of products including inks, paints and hydraulic fluids. In 1966, evidence accumulated which linked the compounds not only with cancer, but with still births, deformities and neurological disorders. There have been no substitutes for these uses yet marketed. Large amounts of PCB's currently appear in streams and reportedly result from accidental leaks and spills.

The state does not routinely test for PCB levels in any of its programs that monitor water, but since the compounds have appeared in fish, the DEP has monitored river bottom sediment which nourishes the weeds fish feed on.

The Federal Food and Drug Administration currently allows 5 parts of PCB per million in fish for human consumption. The Fish and Wildlife Service of the Department of Interior disputes that policy and considers one half part per million in a fish egg a serious sign of trouble for fish populations and by inference for the human part of the food chain.

The legislators also remarked that our major source of PCB'S in Connecticut waters is coming from the two sources in Massachusetts. Their feeling was that we should show good faith to our sister state by passage of this bill and hope that Massachusetts will follow suit.

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