PCB Contamination Put at 10 MM Pounds Yearly In an Estimate by Train

Environmental Protection Agency estimates that 10 million pounds of polychlorinated biphenyls enter the environment annually, but the agency has no immediate plans for putting a stop to it.

The estimate was given by Thomas E. Kopp of EPA's Office of Toxic Substances at the outset of a three-day meeting in Chicago on PCB's called by EPA to clarify the implications of PCB contamination and to discuss needs for bringing the problem under control.

EPA Administrator Russell Train also addressed the conference, using it as a forum to make another pitch for Congressional approval of broad toxic substances control legislation.

Citing a World Health Organization estimate that 80 to 90 percent of all human cancer is caused by environmental factors, Mr.

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Train said that what this suggests is that both our popular understanding and our public approach to health care and disease control are in searching need for re-examination and possibly radical revision.

He said that EPA would cope with the PCB problem as best it could under existing authority, notably the Water Pollution Control Act, but added that this would be a very difficult route to go and he was not entirely satisfied that this law is strong enough to halt the contamination.

What is needed, he said, is passage of the toxic substances control bill now pending in Congress.

Dr. Frederick W. Kutz of EPA's human monitoring program says possibly 41 to 45 percent of all Americans have PCG's in their tissues. He says the chemical has also been found in human milk.

In Canada, the limit on PCB's in edible flesh of fish has been set at two ppm as compared with five ppm in the US.