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Indiana first to ban use of toxic chemical

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Indiana has become the first state in the nation to ban the general use of the toxic chemical polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs).

Use of the jelly-like chemical, now utilized in the manufacture of vinyl products, will be restricted to closed electrical circuits, and then only with approval of the Environmental Management Board.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has determined that the substance causes severe skin problems and hair loss. It also has been linked to cancer and birth defects.

Penalties for violating the measure, which was signed into law Tuesday by Gov. Otis R. Bowen, allow for a jail sentence of up to 30 days and a $10,000 fine. The measure takes effect May 1.

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Consumers Seek Use Of PCB Equipment

LANSING (UPI) — Michigan utilities could continue using equipment containing the pollutant PCB for decades under an amendment sought by Consumers Power Co. to legislation banning the chemical.

The Jackson-based utility told a Senate subcommittee Thursday that it does not oppose the ban on PCB, which has been linked with the death of Great Lakes fish and other birds and animals.

However, Consumers Power spokesmen said they want the House-passed measure to allow them to retain PCB-containing systems until they are replaced through normal wear.

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