Press-Telegram
LONG BEACH, CALIF.
D. 90,155

DEC 13 1976 EFE

BAN ON IMPORT OF TOXIC CHEMICAL SOUGHT

WASHINGTON (AP)— Rep. Les Aspin, D-Wis., said Sunday that with U.S. production of the toxic chemical PCB to end in 1977, imports of the substance have risen sharply, apparently in an effort to prolong its use.

Under the new Toxic Substances Act, all use of PCB in the United States must end by June 1, 1979, but Aspin said the sole U.S. manufacturer, Monsanto Chemical Co., planned to end production by October, 1977.

"Unless imports are quickly ended," Aspin said "PCB will continue to threaten the environment and at an accelerating rate, judging from this year's imports."

He said he would ask the Environmental Protection Agency to ban further PCB imports before the 1979 deadline.

An EPA spokesman said the agency had no intention of speeding up the PCB ban. He said Congress allowed the two-year delay to give industries time to obtain suitable replacements for PCB.

PCB, a group of related chemicals called "polychlorinated biphenyls," is used in industrial and mechanical applications, including use as a coolant sealed inside electric transformers and capacitors.

It often escapes to the environment through industrial waste discharges, accidental release and the junking of equipment containing it.

PCB has not been shown to harm humans but has caused illness in laboratory animals. The EPA found it in samples of human mothers' milk, indicating that it is being absorbed by humans.

MONS 050775