56-64F ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT
NEWS
MO.

APR 1976 CLIPPED BY BACON'S

1100

STATES MOVE AGAINST PCBs, FLUOROCARBONS
(Chemecology)

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has set limits on discharges of polychlorinated biphenyls to state waters. Beginning January 1, 1977, PCB discharges by industry must not exceed .01 milligrams per liter as measured in a 24-hour composite sample. After February 2, 1979, such discharges must not exceed .005 milligrams per liter.

In a related move, the Department has asked the legislature to ban the sale, purchase or manufacture of PCBs in the state after February 1, 1977. Exceptions would be allowed only "in furtherance of public health, safety or welfare."

In New York, meanwhile, the Department of Environmental Conservation has a new labeling rule for aerosol spray cans containing chlorofluorocarbons. Such containers sold or distributed in the state after January 1, 1977, must be labeled: "Contains chlorofluorocarbon propellant which may harm the environment."

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY DECLINING

According to an assessment by the National Wildlife Federation, overall environmental quality in the United States generally declined during 1975. Land use was one of the big losers, the report said, in part because of the "torpedoing" of federal land use and strip mine legislation and despite adoption by several states of planning proposals. Recent trends toward loss of wildlife habitats and the destruction of wetlands continued, according to the assessment. One glimmer in the otherwise "generally somber picture," NWF said, was some improvement in air quality. The report noted that public support for environmental goals remains undiminished.

MONSANTO WILL STOP MAKING PCBs
(New York State Environment, February 1976)

Monsanto announced in late January that it plans to phase out the manufacture of the toxic chemicals, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). The chemicals have caused liver damage, cancer and massive reproductive failure in laboratory animals, as well as allergic dermatitis, nausea, dizziness and other symptoms among people working with PCBs.

MONS 035217

The company has not decided a timetable for the phase-out, but said the PCB unit will be closed "as soon as we are satisfied that the electrical power supply industry's needs for usable, acceptable alternate dielectric fluids have been met."

Commenting on this recent development, DEC Commissioner Ogden Reid said, "The action of Monsanto to phase out PCBs is clear recognition of EPA's call for zero discharge of this pollutant. This follows DEC's proposed order to this effect, international treaty commitments of the U.S. through the Organization for Economic Consideration and Development to control use of PCBs, and reflects growing public determination that public health and environmental preservation must come first."

Dielectric fluids, nonconductors of direct electrical current, are necessary insulators in most power generating equipment.

Although Monsanto has been working to find a replacement for PCBs for several years, the difficulty has been finding an alternative which exhibits the same fire resistant quality of the PCB chemicals.

Monsanto is the sole U.S. manufacturer of PCBs; but imports remain a source of PCBs in this country.

The ubiquitous PCBs have been used in a myriad of manufacturing processes since 1930, including paints, paper products, plastics, printing ink, caulking compounds and hydraulic fluids. When Monsanto restricted sales in 1970 to makers of the so-called "closed system" uses, capacitors and transformers, production dropped to 50 percent.

In December, Dow Chemical Company disclosed plans to market a replacement insulating fluid for use in high-voltage power capacitors. Such capacitors account for one-fifth of the use of PCBs.

The new fluid is chemically known as monochloro-butylated-diphenyloxide. Dow claims the new product is "environmentally safe," after research evaluations of toxicity, biodegradability and other characteristics. Their conclusions were that the product would have a "far lower potential impact on health and the environment" than its predecessors, the PCBs.

Other substitutes for use in transformers have been announced by Dow Corning Corp., a joint unit of Corning Glass Works and Dow Chemical, and by RTE Corporation.