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PCB ban near final vote

LANSING, Mich. (AP) — A bill prohibiting the manufacture, sale and use of a toxic chemical has moved into position for a final House vote.

The House, on a voice vote Monday, approved a substitute for the original bill concerning polychlorinated biphenyl, commonly referred to as PCB. The original bill was proposed by Rep. David Bonior, D-Mount Clemens.

The substitute version adopted to replace the original tightens the definition of what constitutes a PCB. Bonior said the tighter definition was needed because the original "would have been too disruptive to the economy."

The bill reduces, over a three-year period, the concentration of PCB that can be contained in an item in Michigan to 100 parts per million.

The only exception is if PCB is used in a closed system, such as for electric transformers or capacitors.

The director of the Department of Natural Resources would be responsible for administering the legislation should it become law.

Bonior said the bill would cost the state about $30,000 annually.

The Department of Natural Resources says PCB, a widely used chemical in industry and household goods, has been found in alarming levels in several species of Lake Michigan fish.

The DNR says the virtually indestructible chemical has been cited as causing deaths and reproductive failures in mink and fish-eating birds.

The chemical is used in hydraulic fluids and adhesives and as lamination for metals and ceramics, in textile coverings, waterproofing, varnishes and paints.

It is related to polybrominated biphenyl, PBB, which was accidentally mixed in with livestock feed three years ago forcing the destruction of tens of thousands of farm animals.

In other action, the House approved on a voice vote, a resolution of tribute to the Flint Journal in honor of its 100th anniversary in April. The resolution, sponsored by House Speaker Bobby Crim, D-Davison, now goes to the Senate.

There was no major action in the Senate. Both branches of the legislature were to reconvene at 2 p.m. today.

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