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# *Government acts against PCB menace*

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The federal government has begun to move toward the banning of all non-electrical uses of highly-persistent polychlorinated biphenyles in Canada following a task force report to the environment and health and welfare departments that recommends the phasing out of all uses of highly-persistent PCBs.

Highly-valued for their insulating qualities and their insolubility, PCBs have become a tremendous environmental liability because they don't break down even over many decades.

PCBs are fire-resistant liquids which have been widely used for more than 40 years in many applications, including heat transfer fluid, hydraulics, printing inks, copying paper, paints and plasticizers. In Canada, they are used mainly as insulating oil and dielectric fluid in electrical transformers and capacitors.

Recent experiments have shown that they are toxic at much lower levels than was previously indicated.

There is no known manufacturer of PCBs in Canada. The Canadian market has been supplied almost exclusively through Monsanto Canada Ltd. by imports from Monsanto Co. in the U.S. When evidence of undesirable ecological effects of PCBs began to build up, Monsanto changed its PCB product line to reduce the environmental persistence of waste capacitor and transformer fluids and then phased out sales of PCBs to buyers other than electrical equipment manufacturers.

These changes began in 1970 and by the middle of 1973, stocks of PCBs in the hands of manufacturers outside the electrical equipment industry were believed to have been largely exhausted. But stocks of products that contain PCBs are not yet exhausted.