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PCB labeling rule "too lax"

By Mary Stevenson
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LANSING, Mich. (AP) —
Proposed state labeling
requirements for toxic PCBs
are too lax, a spokesman for a
conservation group said
Wednesday.

Wayne Schmidt of the
Michigan United Conservation
Clubs told a Department of
Natural Resources public
hearing that labeling rules
being considered as part of a
PCB regulation package cover
too few products, and contain
too few safeguards.

Industry representatives,
meanwhile, begged the state
to keep paperwork to a
minimum when they imple-
ment a new law that takes
effect April 1, 1977.

The law calls for

progressive reduction of the
amount of polychlorinated
biphenyls that can be
manufactured, sold, or used in
Michigan. The DNR is trying
to come up with rules to help
implement the law.

PCBs, chemicals which
have tainted fish in Lake
Michigan and are considered
toxic and environmentally
harmful, are manufactured in
this country solely by the
Monsanto Chemical Co.,
according to the DNR. The
chemicals are used in a
variety of household products,
electrical transformers and
capacitors, and in paper
production.

The rules under con-
sideration require disposal of
PCBs in approved landfills or
incinerators. However, no
such disposal facilities have
been designated by the state
yet.

The rules also require
companies to file a notice of
intent to use PCBs along with
annual reports on the use of
the substance, and require
PCB or PCB-containing
products sold in Michigan to
bear labels noting the content,
describing the chemical as an
environmental contaminant
and warning against contact.

"The labeling requirements
should be more stringent,"
said Schmidt. He said the
requirements also should
apply to existing electrical
transformers built before the
law's effective date.

"This will eliminate a
frantic record search at the
time of an accident to
determine if the leaking
material is PCB," Schmidt
said.

Of the wording of the
warning labels, he suggested
the labels should include an

emergency telephone number
for contacting the DNR in case
of accidents. He argued that
such accidents could occur
outside of the industrial set-
ting, and said the public
"doesn't know how to handle
it."

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