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# EPA: Get chemical out of water

WASHINGTON (UPD) — Environmental Protection chief Russell Train announced yesterday a plan, depending largely on voluntary action by industry, to sharply reduce discharge of polychlorinated biphenyls — "a delayed action timebomb" — into U.S. waterways.

The EPA administrator said PCBs, which have been showing up in the food supply — particularly in freshwater fish — are a "serious threat" to human health.

"We must as a society, accept and work toward a goal of totally eliminating the production, importation and use of PCBs as rapidly as possible," he said.

PCBs, used since 1929 in such products as inks, paints and plastics, are used mainly as insulating fluids in electrical equipment. They do not break down in the environment, but persist in the food chain.

TRAIN SAID PCB levels above five parts per million have been found in fish from the Great Lakes, the upper Mississippi River, off the Southern California coast and the Hudson River — endangering commercial fishing industries there.

Lab tests have found PCBs cause reproductive failures, gastric disorders, skin lesions and tumors in mammals. Japan banned their production after about 1,000 people became ill in 1968 from eating rice oil containing a PCB.

Train urged quick passage by Congress of a Toxic Substances Act to grant the EPA authority to limit or ban the use or distribution of hazardous chemicals such as PCBs.

MEANWHILE, he told EPA regional offices to work with states in surveying plant discharge and setting guidelines to "virtually eliminate" PCB from process wastes of all manufacturers of PCBs and transformers that use them.

The surveys also will determine if air emission

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