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State Agency Seeks PCB Ban

LANSING — (UPI) — The Natural Resources Commission asked the Legislature Friday to ban use of the industrial chemical PCB. The commission says PCB has contaminated Lake Michigan trout and presents possible human health hazards.

The departments of Agriculture and Public Health began looking into the possibility of banning human consumption of the fish.

On a 5-0 vote, the commission urged the Legislature to outlaw polychlorinated biphenyls in Michigan after hearing a staff report that PCB has been detected in "alarming" levels in lake trout.

"The health experts and our people feel that it's a serious threat, as DDT was a serious threat," said Commission Chairman Carl T. Johnson of Cadillac. "I don't think we're trying to make a scare tactic of it. But it's something so serious that we feel substitutes should be provided."

The commission also directed the Department of Natural Resources to seek a nationwide ban of PCB.

PCB is widely used in industrial processes as hydraulic fluid, heat transfer fluid and insulation for electrical transformers.

It was unclear just how widespread human consumption of the tainted fish has been.

DNR officials said fishermen eat the fish regularly but that they are marketed for the public only when caught accidentally with commercial fish.

Mark Mason, Gov. Milliken's aide for the environment, said the Department of Agriculture was attempting to determine whether all lake trout should be kept out of commercial markets.

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