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## Industrial Chemical Added To 'Public Enemies' List

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CHICAGO — An obscure industrial material called PCB — polychlorinated biphenyls — was added Wednesday to the nation's environmental public enemies list.

More than 400 scientists, governmental officials, and environmentalists gathered in Chicago for the first national PCB conference to focus attention on a growing environmental public health threat.

Described as a cross between DDT and mercury, PCB is a slow-acting poison and accumulates in the body, eventually causing symptoms such as fatigue, skin disor-

ders, numbness, and reproductive failure.

"THE EVIDENCE we have accumulated over the last three years has underscored our original concern over the toxicity of PCB and over the potential health hazard posed by the presence of high PCB concentrations in waterways, water supplies, and fish," said Russell Train, keynote speaker at the three-day conference.

Train is administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Lake Michigan fish have been banned from interstate commerce by the Food and Drug Administration because their PCB content violates pure food laws.

The allowable limit now is 5 parts per million of PCB in food, and observers at the conference expect that limit to be lowered as a public health safeguard. Dr. Masanori Kuratsune of Japan told the conference that his country banned the use of PCB earlier this year after 1,200 Japanese were poisoned by PCB-contaminated rice oil.

Efforts to control PCB in the United States can be expected to have economic impacts, say federal officials. About 99 per cent of the PCB used in the U.S. is produced by the Monsanto plant in Sauget, Ill.

A HIGHLY heat-resistant material, most PCBs are used in electrical equipment such as transformers and capacitors. Some is used for making plastics.

Train argued that the PCB threat underscores the need for a strong national toxic substances control law that would require public health testing before chemicals could be put into commercial use.

"We again and again find ourselves engaged in an extremely difficult and drawn-out struggle to protect the public from a hazard to which it already has been exposed, while at the same time trying to avoid putting people out of business or out of work," Train said.

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