FOREIGN TRADE: TREASURY TERMINATES COUNTERVAILING DUTY INQUIRY OF OXYGEN SENSING PROBES FROM CANADA

Assistant Secretary of the Treausry David R. Macdonald has announced a termination of the countervailing duty investigation of oxygen sensing probes from Canada.

On June 30, 1975, a "Notice of Tentative Termination of Countervailing Duty Investigation" was published with respect to the subject merchandise. Interested persons were given an opportunity to submit written comments on the tentative termination. No information has been received that would change the basis for that decision.

Accordingly, Macdonald said, this final termination indicates that the investigation is being terminated on the basis that there have been no imports of oxygen sensing probes during the recent past and that production of this item will be discontinued. Should imports of oxygen sensing probes from Canada resume at any time, the Treasury Department will reopen its investigation as to the existence of bounties or grants under section 303 of the Tariff Act of 1930, as amended (19 U.S.C. 1303).

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CHEMICALS: "ENVIRONMENTAL DESTRUCTIVE" PCBs IMPORTED AT INCREASED RATE, ASPIN CHARGES

Rep. Les Aspin (D-Wis) today released figures showing that "environmentally destructive" polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) are being imported at a rate 40 percent higher than the 1972 rate.

PCBs are toxic industrial chemicals used in a variety of products. The substance has been found to be harmful to animals and humans, and has become a great problem in the Great Lakes regions and in New York State where they are added to waterways as industrial waste.

Aspin, who discovered the increase in PCB imports from figures given to him by the Customs Service, has introduced legislation (HR 9525) to ban PCB imports and their use in interstate commerce. That legislation has been referred to the Commerce Consumer Protection Subcommittee.

PCBs have been produced for industrial purposes since 1929, but they were not recognized as environmental contaminants until 1966, Aspin said.

In 1972, the U.S. imported 276,459 pounds of PCBs, and during the first nine months of 1975, the nation imported 288,825 pounds. The projected 1975 figure could be as high as 385,009 pounds--a 40 percent increase, Aspin said.

The primary use of PCBs is as a coolant in transformers and other electrical equipment. Other items such as surface coatings, plasticizers, sealants, adhesives, printing inks and carbonless copy paper have contained this chemical.

In 1971, Aspin said, Monsanto Chemical Company, the sole domestic producer of PCBs, voluntarily restricted sales of the chemical to use in electrical equipment.

"It was originally hoped that Monsanto's action would greatly limit the use of PCBs, and would in turn diminish the problem of PCB contamination," Aspin stated. "However, the PCB problem has not diminished. It is increasing and now we know why." Aspin continued He added that PCBs have been turning up in nonelectrical products and in places where electrical equipment is not being used.

MONS 078062

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In 1972, the Food and Drug Administration set up PCB maximum tolerance levels for fish, shell fish, food packaging materials, animal feed and poultry and dairy products. FDA and the Environmental Protection Agency monitor fish samplings and wastes and FDA has the authority to stop shipments of fish in interstate commerce which exceed the established tolerance levels.

EPA also is planning to propose stringent PCB pollution rules in 1976, which, it is hoped, will severely limit discharges into rivers and streams, Aspin stated. "Through the continued importation of PCDs we are undoing all of our efforts towards phasing out the use of PCBs and towards diminishing the PCB pollution problem."

"The figures I am releasing only confirm the suspicions which I have had for a number of months -- the PCB imports are rising, and that the need for a ban on these imports is crucial," Aspin concluded.

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