UPI WIRE STORY -- 4/19/79

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(PCBS)

WASHINGTON (UPI) -- THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY ISSUED FINAL RULES TODAY BANNING THE MANUFACTURE AND MOST USES OF PCBS, INDUSTRIAL INSULATING CHEMICALS SUSPECTED OF CAUSING CANCER.

UNDER THE RULES, REQUIRED BY THE TOXIC SUBSTANCES CONTROL ACT, PCBS WILL BE ALLOWED TO CONTINUE IN USE ONLY IN TOTALLY ENCLOSED ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT, AND THEN ONLY FOR THE LIFE OF THE EQUIPMENT.

"ALTHOUGH PCBS ARE NO LONGER BEING PRODUCED IN THIS COUNTRY, WE WILL NOW BRING UNDER CONTROL THE VAST MAJORITY OF PCBS STILL IN USE. THIS WILL HELP PREVENT FURTHER CONTAMINATION OF OUR AIR, WATER AND FOOD SUPPLIES FROM A TOXIC AND VERY PERSISTENT MADE-MADE CHEMICAL," SAID EPA ADMINISTRATOR DOUGLAS COSTLE.

MANY INDUSTRIAL USES OF PCBS WOULD END OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS, THE AGENCY SAID. IN ADDITION THERE WOULD BE A BAN ON THE USE OF PCB-CONTAMINATED OIL FOR DUST CONTROL ON ROADS.

MILLIONS OF POUNDS OF POLYCHLORINATED BIPHENYLS WERE MANUFACTURED FROM 1929 TO 1977, PRIMARILY FOR USE AS INSULATING FLUIDS AND COOLANTS IN ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT AND MACHINERY.

THE EPA HAS ESTIMATED THAT PERHAPS 150 MILLION POUNDS OF THE CHEMICAL ARE DISPERSED IN THE AIR AND WATER, WITH ANOTHER 290 MILLION POUNDS IN LANDFILLS.

"EPA WILL ALLOW USE AND SERVICING OF MOST EXISTING LARGE ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT CONTAINING PCBS (REPRESENTING NEARLY 570 MILLION POUNDS OF THE 750 MILLION POUNDS OF PCBS NOW IN USE) UNDER CONTROLLED CONDITIONS FOR THE LIFE OF THE EQUIPMENT," THE AGENCY SAID.

"A REQUIREMENT TO IMMEDIATELY REPLACE ALL OF THIS EQUIPMENT WOULD BE PROHIBITIVELY EXPENSIVE."

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