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Minnesota asks federal ban on PCB

ST. PAUL, Minn. — The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's board of directors voted unanimously Tuesday to request a federal ban on the sale and use of the toxic chemical PCB.

Quantities of PCB — polychloronated biphenyls — exceeding federal standards for human consumption have been found in fish taken from Lake Pepin on the Mississippi River, Lake Michigan and Lake Superior.

The chemicals are believed to cause birth defects and reproductive failure in fish, birds and mammals. They are also suspected of causing cancer.

PCA staff members believe a national ban is the only practical approach to the PCB problem, because PCB use is so widespread a state ban would be ineffective.

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