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JUL 22 1975

PCB ban sought

LANSING (UPI) — The chairman of the House Marine Affairs Committee has introduced legislation to ban the use of PCB in Michigan, prompted by discovery of high levels of the toxic industrial chemical in Great Lakes fish.

"The effects of PCB on humans are still uncertain," said Rep. David Bonoir, DMount Clemens, "but there have been reports of it causing illness such as nausea and dizziness.

"Considering its potential harmful effect on people and wildlife, I think it's time we get rid of PCB altogether."

PCB is used in many industrial compounds and processes, including fire-resistant hydraulic fluids, heat transfer fluids, electrical transformer and capacitor insulation, plasticizers and specialty inks.

The Department of Natural Resources says PCB levels in some fish are well over the five parts per million allowed by the Food and Drug Administration guidelines.

The DNR's policy-making body, the Natural Resources Commission, has urged the legislature to ban PCB use.

"Fish-eating birds have also been affected by PCB," Bonior said. "So have minks which are fed a fish diet, and monkeys which have undergone tests with PCB.

"Some of these animals have had severe reproductive failure and have unnaturally high mortality rates. It's bad enough that this chemical is affecting our wildlife, but it is alarming to think that it may have the same effect on humans."

Authorities have cautioned pregnant women and children to eat no more than one serving per week of fish suspected of containing PCB.

MONS 031087