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House passes measure to restrict PCB use

The Minnesota House unanimously passed a bill Thursday that bans the use of chemical substances known as PCBs without permission from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (PCA).

The bill, introduced by Rep. Willard Munger, DFL-Duluth, requires a "certificate of exemption" from the agency for anyone who buys, sells, uses or manufactures PCBs or a product containing PCBs beginning Jan. 1, 1978. By July 1, 1977, products containing PCBs would have to be labeled, giving the concentration.

High concentrations of PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls) have been found in fish taken from Lake Pepin on the Mississippi River and, more recently, in trout from Lake Superior. Health officials warn against eating more than one meal each week of fish from lakes where high levels of PCBs have been found. Munger said that in Minnesota the predominant use of PCBs is in the fluid used in electrical transformers and capacitors.

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