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Committee Approves Bill To Ban the Sale of PCBs

By PEGGY McCARTHY

HARTFORD — A bill to ban the sale, use and manufacture of a pollutant called polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), except for use in closed electrical systems, yesterday was given a favorable report by the legislature's Environment committee.

The ban would take effect Jan. 1, 1980.

State Rep. Thom Serrani, D-Stamford, said the synthetic chemical is "very dangerous," adding it has been known to cause cancer and birth deformities. He and State Senator George L. Gunther, R-Stratford, are co-authors of the bill.

The measure would require that when used in electrical systems such as transformers that the item be labeled to indicate that it contains PCBs, so that it would be disposed in a way that is not harmful to the environment.

Rep. Serrani said that the Universal Manufacturing Corporation in Bridgeport is the only company in the State that he knows that uses PCBs.

He said that the chemical can get into streams and rivers, be inhaled by fish and "end up in the bodies of human beings."

Rep. Serrani explained that it is man-made, and not biodegradable.

According to a report released by the Connecticut Citizen Action Group (CCAG), striped bass taken from the Long Island Sound near Black Rock harbor contained an amount of PCBs beyond the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) limit for being fit for human consumption. "A sample from Westport was perilously close to the limit," the report stated.

"PCBs have also been found in the sediment of a number of Connecticut's rivers including the Housatonic, Quinnipiac, Park and Still Rivers," it continued.

The measure needs the approval of both houses of the legislature before becoming law.

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