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St. Louis Post-Dispatch PCB

Laws To Curb Chemicals In Environment Urged

WASHINGTON, May 24 (AP) — Warning that billions of pounds of potentially poisonous chemicals are entering the environment each year, the Nixon Administration has urged legislation to restrict their use.

"There is no longer any valid reason for continued failure to develop and exercise reasonable controls over toxic substances in the environment," said Russell E. Train, chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality.

The Administration's proposed legislation, Train said, would empower the environmental protection agency "to restrict the use or distribution, including a total prohibition, of a chemical substance, if such restrictions were necessary to protect health and the environment."

Train, appearing before a House Commerce subcommittee,

said nearly 5,000 synthetic organic compounds were in commercial use in 1968, with production totaling more than 120 billion pounds.

"With the changes in industrial needs and technological knowledge, new and more complex compounds with new and different uses are constantly being developed and introduced into use," he said.

"The results of the interaction between living organisms and chemical compounds are often unpredictable, but such interactions may produce materials or concentrations that are more dangerous than that of the initial pollutants."

He cited polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBS) and cadmium pollutants that were not regulated soon enough.

PCBS introduced in the 1930s, caused skin disorders, blindness and liver and stomach damage to more than 600 Japanese exposed accidentally to high levels, Train said.

More than 100 persons died in Japan from eating rice irrigated with cadmium polluted water in Japan in the 1960s, he said.

Under the Administration's

proposed Toxic Substances Control Act, which earlier passed the Senate in slightly amended form, the EPA administrator would issue standards for chemicals compounds to insure that human health or wildlife was not endangered.

"A new compound would be forbidden to be marketed if it did not meet these standards," Train said.