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PCB BAN ASKED

ST. PAUL (UPI) — Minnesota's two Democratic senators have called for a ban on PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls) or at least better methods for disposing of the toxic chemical.

Sens. Hubert Humphrey and Walter Mondale joined the growing controversy over PCBs during a visit Monday of the Metropolitan Waste Control Commission, where they were told the commission is helping search for the source of PCB contamination of the Mississippi River.

PCBs, used in plastics, printers ink, hydraulic fluid and electrical insulators, are manufactured only by Monsanto Co. in the United States.

A commission staff member told the two senators that Monsanto had refused to disclose who purchases the chemical, prompting Mondale to urge that PCBs be prohibited or that at least "we ought to know" who's using the chemical.

When they were told that PCBs are essential to the electrical-transformer industry, Humphrey suggested that better disposal methods be found.

Besides portions of the Mississippi, the chemical has been found in Lake Superior and Lake Pepin, where authorities believed concentrations merited a ban on commercial fishing earlier this summer. Carp fishing has been allowed to resume on Pepin as long as catches are limited to fish of five pounds or less.

In addition, concentrations of PCBs not believed to be dangerous have been found in groundwater near Winona and traced to oil from electrical transformers deposited in a junkyard. Initial concern was for municipal wells not far from the contaminated groundwater, but tests showed most of the chemical from the spilled oil apparently remained in the ground.

PCBs are believed to cause birth defects and reproductive failures and possibly cancer.

92-22 THE NEW YORKER
WKLY. 430,000

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"I understand that despite all the warnings we've had, General Electric was putting 48 pounds of PCB into the Hudson at Hudson Falls and Fort Edward each day," Mr. Reid said. "This year, they apparently reduced the amount to less than two pounds a day. I don't see why they should be putting any of this stuff into any river."—*The Times.*

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Toxic chemical should be banned except for use in capacitors, group says

CHICAGO, Ill. — An environmental study group has recommended a ban be placed on all domestic and imported polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), except for use in electrical capacitors and transformers, according to an article in the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency's Environment Midwest publication.

The Lake Michigan Toxic Substances Committee agreed with an earlier task force report that continued use of PCB in capacitors and transformers in the near future is necessary because of the significantly increased risk of fire and explosion and the disruption of electrical service which would result in an outright ban.

Additionally, PCB use in these two applications presents a minimal risk to the environment. The Monsanto Industrial Chemical Co. has placed voluntary restrictions on its distribution of PCB to all except manufacturers of the electrical equipment and this will bring a decrease in the amount of PCBs in the environment, the group said.