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Bill to ban PCBs voted by House panel

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SPRINGFIELD—A bill to ban the manufacture and sale of the chemical known as PCB passed an initial test Thursday when it got the unanimous backing of the House Committee on Environment, Energy, and Natural Resources.

PCBs [polychlorinated biphynals] have been blamed for a wide range of disorders, including miscarriages, birth defects, and tumors in humans, and declining population and deformities in fish. The level of PCB found in Lake Michigan's fish is so high that some Food and Drug Administration officials have considered an outright ban on all sport fishing there.

The PCB bill, sponsored by Rep. L. Michael Getty [D., Dolton], met little opposition Thursday and is even backed by the Monsanto Chemical Corp., which manufactures 80 per cent of all PCBs.

A THREE-YEAR phaseout period called for in the bill would allow the company time to develop substitutes for the chemical, now used mainly in electrical components.

The committee finally agreed on the bill after weeks of testimony by state and federal Environmental Protection Agency officials and environmentalists who warned of the chemical's dangers and compared it to the outlawed pesticide DDT.

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