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Committee plans hearing on PCB bill

By BETH BURGESON

HARTFORD (CSNB) — The possible contamination of state waters by industrial chemicals is causing concern in the legislature's Environment Committee.

The committee voted unanimously Wednesday to raise for public hearing a bill which would ban the use of PCBs in Connecticut manufacturing by 1980. Polychlorinated biphenyls are heat resistant compounds which accumulated evidence has linked with cancer, still births, deformities and neurological disorders.

"This is a new subject to me," said Rep. Thom Serrani, D-Stamford, who proposed the bill. "I want to get information on it out in the open."

The Department of Environmental Protection is testing sediment in Connecticut rivers and in Long Island Sound where PCBs settle to determine whether levels exceed federal standards. Some recent reports have shown increased concentrations in fish which feed on organisms in the sediment.

The DEP is concerned about potential pollution from the Bridgeport site and from the Massachusetts firms which discharge into the Housatonic River.

"In Connecticut we have one manufacturer, but Massachusetts has at least two using PCBs. Before we ask them to stop, we have to do it in our own state," Serrani said.

The Environment Committee will hold a public hearing on the issue later in the session.

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