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Aspin says PCB imports increasing

WASHINGTON (AP) — Rep. Les Aspin, D-Wis., said yesterday

that with U.S. production of the toxic chemical PCB to end in 1977, imports of the substance have risen sharply, apparently in an effort to prolong its use.

Under the new Toxic Substances Act, all use of PCB in the United States must end by June 1, 1979, but Aspin said the sole U.S. manufacturer, Monsanto Chemical Co., planned to end production by October, 1977.

"Unless imports are quickly ended," Aspin said in a statement issued by his office "PCBs will continue to threaten the environment — and at an accelerating rate, judging from this year's imports."

He said he will ask the Environmental Protection Agency to ban further PCB imports before the 1979 legal deadline, once the incoming administration of

President-elect Carter has taken office.

Asked about Aspin's statement, an EPA spokesman said the agency has no present intention of speeding up the ban on PCB.

He said Congress allowed the two-year delay to give industries time to obtain suitable replacements for PCB, and the agency still considered that a valid approach to the problem.

PCB, a group of related chemicals called "polychlorinated biphenyls," is used in industrial and mechanical applications, including use as a coolant sealed inside electric transformers and capacitors.

It often escapes to the environment through industrial waste discharges, accidental release, and the junking of equipment containing it.