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R. H. KEITH
... McGraw-Edison Official

Firm Stops Using PCBs

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Record Staff Writer

McGraw-Edison Company, a producer of high-voltage power capacitors, announced today it will discontinue use of hazardous PCBs in its production.

In press conferences in Columbia and Pittsburgh, the company said it has developed with Dow Chemical Company a suitable substitute, called Edisol.

PCBs, polychlorinated biphenyls, have been found in large quantities in fish in Lake Hartwell. They are dangerous to man and are suspected of causing cancer.

The general manager of McGraw-Edison's Greenwood plant, R.H. Keith, said Edisol is not as toxic as PCBs and is biodegradable. That means that unlike PCBs, Edisol will break down into harmless chemicals in the environment.

KEITH SAID Edisol rates an 8 in a rating of chemicals on a danger scale of 4 to 20. PCBs rate an 18. Automobile brake fluid, for example, rates a 10.

The use of Edisol, which has a chlorodiphenyl oxide base, will increase the cost of McGraw Edison's capacitors by 25 per cent, Keith said. He said capacitors with Edisol already are on the market and that hundreds have been sold.

Utility companies like SCE&G and other industries use the capacitors to improve efficiency of power distribution. The capacitors are a familiar sight on utility poles.

PCBs HAVE been used in industry for about 40 years. At one time the chemical was used in some kinds of ink and paint.

Keith said when large concentrations of PCBs were detected to be building up in the environment in the early 1970's a ban on open use of PCBs was put into effect. From that point they have been allowed only in closed containers such as the capacitors.

Sangamo Electric, a com-

(See SUBSTITUTE, 1-B)

Substitute

(Continued From 1-B)

petitor of McGraw-Edison, was found to be the source of Lake Hartwell pollution from its plant in Pickens County.

As a result of a ban on fishing in the lake, a group of property owners near Lake Hartwell has filed suit against Sangamo for $1 billion.

A similar suit for $500 million has been filed in Georgia against General Electric Co., another maker of high-voltage capacitors, and its PCB supplier, Monsanto of St. Louis, for pollution of the Coosa River.

Keith said some escape of PCB's is inevitable in production of the capacitors. He said, however, that since starting production in Greenwood, McGraw-Edison has taken precautions against PCB's entering the environment by using a different process than some other companies use.

The plant manager said the company has been working since the early 1970's to try to find an environmentally suitable substitute for PCB's.

At present, a bill that would ban use of PCB's is before the House and Senate. The chemicals have been banned in Japan.

PCB's have been found in fish, cattle and mother's milk. They have been known to cause a skin rash in humans, Keith said.

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