

recognizes the significance of standards," and "may be pursued to actually bar litigation if it can be shown that the product was manufactured according to recognized standards."

Other proposals, he pointed out, "would at least provide that valid certification would be a legitimate defense. As a minimum, the fact that a product was manufactured according to a standard and has been certified as such should at least be admissible evidence, which is too often not now the case. Such legislation is possible; the big question is whether it is probable. One answer to that question lies in the credibility of certification programs."

ANSI's program for accrediting existing certification systems for products and services is directed toward improving credibility, Pinegan stated.

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**ENVIRONMENT: IMPORTS OF PCBs HAVE INCREASED
BY 73 PERCENT SINCE 1973, REP. ASPIN REPORTS**

Imports of the chemical PCB have increased by 72 percent since 1973, as firms apparently are trying to circumvent a future federal ban on the chemical, Rep. Les Aspin (D-Wis) asserted today.

According to data Aspin obtained from the Customs Service, the U.S. imported 316,585 pounds of the chemical during the first eight months of 1976, far exceeding the 276,459 pounds imported during all of 1973.

"The projected PCB imports for this year could be as high as 474,877 pounds--a whopping 72 percent increase in just three years," Aspin said.

PCBs, or polychlorinated biphenyls, are highly toxic industrial chemicals, used primarily in electrical insulation. Consumption of the chemical has been linked to reproductive failures in fish, animals and humans, as well as skin and stomach disorders, Aspin said. "Harmful concentrations of PCBs have also been found in mothers' milk in a recent EPA sample in 11 states, posing a threat to nursing infants," Aspin said.

Congress enacted a ban on importation and manufacture of PCBs this year, and domestic manufacturing is scheduled to stop by October 1977, according to Monsanto, the sole U.S. producer, Aspin stated.

"But," Aspin said, "what concerns me is that we can't expect an end to imports until January 1, 1979 under the new law. The customs figures indicate that manufacturers may be building up stocks to use PCBs well after domestic manufacturing has stopped."

"Unless imports are quickly ended, PCBs will continue to threaten the environment--and at an accelerating rate, judging from this year's imports," Aspin said.

He noted that PCBs have caused economic as well as environmental and health hazards. PCB contamination has led to a decline in commercial and sport fishing on the Great Lakes, Hudson River and other areas, as well as economic losses suffered by mink ranchers, Aspin said.

All of this year's imports have come from France. The shipments, ranging in size from 20,988 to 61,729 pounds, were imported through New York, Pittsburgh, and Los Angeles, Aspin stated.

The Environmental Protection Agency is charged with regulating PCBs under the new law. However, Aspin said EPA has the power to halt imports even before the 1979 Congressional deadline. Aspin said he will urge the incoming administrator of the agency to prohibit imports of the chemical at an early date.

-- End of Section L --

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