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Industrial discharge of PCBs, or polychlorinated biphenyls, into waterways was prohibited by the Environmental Protection Agency. Plants have a year to stop discharging the chemicals, which the EPA said are nonbiodegradable and can cause cancer in humans. Congress previously outlawed manufacture of the insulating chemicals after Jan. 1, 1979.

PCB Discharges Into Waterways Barred by the EPA

By a WALL STREET JOURNAL *Staff Reporter*

WASHINGTON—The Environmental Protection Agency issued rules prohibiting the industrial discharge into waterways of polychlorinated biphenyls, a group of chemicals linked to a number of serious health problems.

EPA Administrator Russell Train, in one of his last official acts before leaving office today, said the rules won't allow any discharge of the chemicals by industrial plants once the regulations take effect. Industries must meet the EPA prohibition within one year.

Congress already has outlawed the manufacture of the chemicals, known as PCBs, after Jan. 1, 1979. The same law will ban all processing and distribution of PCBs in commerce after June 1, 1979.

A proposal the EPA made last July would have sharply restricted PCB discharges but wouldn't have banned them. The EPA estimates that nearly 3,000 pounds of PCBs are dumped into waterways each year. PCBs are most commonly used as liquid insulation for electrical equipment.

Mr. Train said he was ordering the ban rather than restricting the discharges because PCBs "have been shown to be highly toxic, persistent and nonbiodegradable." He added that PCBs "may cause cancer in humans." Also, they are known to cause skin disease and liver problems, and laboratory tests with monkeys have shown a high incidence of reproductive failure.

The new rules follow the EPA's decision in December 1975 to ask industrial users of PCBs to restrict their use voluntarily, and there have been some cutbacks. The rules prohibit discharges of PCBs by manufacturers of the chemicals and also by plants that use PCBs in the production of electrical transformers and capacitors.

Major makers and users of the chemicals include Westinghouse Electric Corp., General Electric Co., Aerovox Industries Inc., the Cornell-Dubilier electronics division of Federal Pacific Electric Co., Sprague Electric Co., Research-Cottrell Inc. and Sangamo Electric Co.

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