

LYNCHBURG, VA.
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PCB pollution

Not long after Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* was published in 1962, "DDT" became a dirty word. Carson's book detailed the adverse effect of pesticides, especially DDT, on the environment, and after 19 years of debate, domestic use of DDT was banned by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on Dec. 31, 1972. Polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs, a group of industrial pollutants that have been in use since 1928, may soon become as infamous as DDT.

PCBs are used primarily as lubricants in the manufacture of electrical transformers and capacitors, but are also employed in the production of adhesives, sealants, printing inks, coatings and waxes. PCBs are manufactured in this country by only one producer, the Monsanto Company. Although concern about PCB pollution has been voiced in the past, it was not until 1972 that governmental action was taken. At that time EPA recommended production curbs, and Monsanto voluntarily stopped selling PCBs to those customers who released them into the en-

vironment. But recent evidence has indicated the continued presence of high concentrations of PCBs in salmon, striped bass and other fish in American waterways.

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Traces of PCBs have been found far from industrial areas—in the Hudson River, the Great Lakes, the upper Mississippi River and the Gulf of Mexico, among other places. The main worry is that PCBs, which have been proved to cause reproductive defects and death in fish, birds and mammals, may spread further up the food chain if strict controls on production are not forthcoming.