

MIDDLETOWN, N. Y.
TIMES HERALD RECORD
D. 45 349 SUN. 41.720

DEC 14 1975

By the

Chemical's usage causes clash

NEW YORK (UPI) — Environmentalists and industry spokesmen clashed Friday at a public hearing over whether a group of chemicals used primarily in electrical equipment should be banned from the market.

The chemicals are known as polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and are used in electrical transformers and capacitors because they are non-flammable. Use of the controversial chemicals was debated at an all-day hearing held by State Attorney General Louis Lefkowitz at his World Trade Center offices.

Lefkowitz said he was seeking to determine whether legislation should be developed to regulate the sale, use and manufacture of PCBs in the state. A Lefkowitz aide is expected to submit recommendations to the next session of the legislature.

The environmentalists called either for the total banning of PCBs or a gradual phasing out of their usage, charging PCBs have been found to cause birth defects and other abnormalities in fish and birds, as well as cancer in rats. They also urged further study of the effects of PCB on the environment.

Industry spokesman countered that PCBs should not be banned until suitable substitutes can be found.

A. Karim Ahmed, of the non-profit Natural Resources Defense Council in Manhattan, said one of the problem areas in the state was the Hudson River, which is known to have high PCB levels.

The state's Environmental Conservation Department is holding enforcement hearings to stop two General Electric plants near Saratoga from dumping PCBs into the Hudson River.