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Minnesota Agency Seeks Restricted Use Of PCB's

ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP) — A Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (PCA) staff report recommends that the sale of a group of toxic chemicals called polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB's) should be banned except for essential uses.

The PCB's have been found in fish from Lake Pepin and Lake Superior.

The report will be presented to the PCA board Tuesday at its regular meeting. If the recommendation is adopted, it will be forwarded to congressional leaders.

The report says that research has established that PCBs can prevent reproduction in fish, birds and mammals. It also is suspected that PCBs can cause cancer.

Fish taken from Lake Superior and Lake Pepin on the Mississippi River between Wabasha and Red Wing, have been found to contain levels of PCB's higher than the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) maximum of five parts per million.

Commercial fishing operations have been stopped in the Lake Pepin area by the FDA. On May 27, the Minnesota Department of Health advised the public to limit consumption of fish taken from the area to one meal a week.

PCBs are used in industrial products, such as hydraulic fluid, printer's ink, heat transfer fluid, electrical insulators and hand soaps.

Several federal and state agencies are seeking the source of the Lake Pepin pollution through water and fish monitoring.