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EPA Hits PCBs . . . But Not Here

"EPA to Attack Problems of PCBs in Alaska and Northwest."

The which is doing what to whom?

Translated into basic English, the recent announcement from the Environmental Protection Agency means the agency has formed a regional task force to investigate uses of polychlorinated biphenyls.

Which requires a little more translation.

Polychlorinated biphenyls (with a name like that, you'd call them PCBs, too) are organic liquids used in the manufacture of electrical transformers and high-temperature lubricants.

They are apparently very persistent chemicals which have many of the same properties as DDT, which is the common name for the insecticide dichloro diphenyl trichloroethane. They are harmful to lower organisms in minute quantities, they interfere with the reproductive cycle and they are passed up the food chain with continuing harmful effects.

A task force has been formed in the Northwest Region serving Alaska, Washington and Oregon to locate and inspect users or manufacturers of PCBs.

According to the local office of the Environmental Protection Agency, there are no known users of the chemicals in Alaska.

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