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CRITICIZE REPORT THAT CHEMICAL WILL POLLUTE FISH

LAKE CITY, Minn. (AP) — Resort operators criticized a state health department warning Wednesday that Lake Pepin fishermen eat their catch no more than once a week because of possible dangers from a chemical.

The health department earlier halted commercial fishing on the lake, which is a widened area of the Mississippi River between Red Wing and Wabash, after tests showed a high level of the industrial chemical polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB). The source of the contamination was a mystery.

Resort owners said they received cancellations from tourists after the commercial fishing ban and said they expect more because of the leisure fishing warning.

In concentrated forms, PCB is suspected to cause birth defects, skin lesions and damage to internal organs.

The health department said it detected concentrations of up to 14 parts per million of PCB in commercial carp catches. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration sets a maximum safe level of five parts per million.

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