

Officials not much closer to PCB link

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MINNEAPOLIS (UPI) — Federal officials said Saturday they are not much closer to locating the origin of a chemical which has contaminated fish in the Mississippi, Minnesota and LeSueur rivers.

Darryl Brown, lab chief of the Food and Drug Administration's Minneapolis office, said carp taken from the LeSueur River's outlet at Lake Elysian contained 15 parts per million of polychlorinated biphenyls or PCB.

The chemicals have been found to cause birth defects in monkeys and other animals, Brown said. A recent study in Japan showed that children of persons exposed to PCB suffered birth defects.

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency has asked the FDA to ban the use of PCB, which is used almost exclusively in power transformers.

The carp containing the highly toxic industrial chemical were taken by Paul Mertins, Waterville, Minn. They contained three times the maximum concentration of PCB judged to be safe by the FDA, which is five parts per million.

Brown said he thinks the carp originally came from the Minnesota River and got into the Le Sueur during high water last spring.

He said the interstate task force investigating the source of PCB in the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers is not much closer to success than earlier this year when fish containing large amounts of the chemical were pulled from Lake Pepin on the Mississippi River.

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