

Out-of-staters dump PCB?

RALFEIGH, N.C. (AP) — State officials say new evidence suggests that the dumping of the chemical polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) along North Carolina highways is the work of truckers for out-of-state industrial firms.

The Highway Patrol has issued a memo alerting troopers to watch for tank trucks with Connecticut or New Jersey license plates, and the state is posting a reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of those responsible for dumping the oily pollutant, which is believed to cause cancer.

So far, more than 70 miles of the spills have been confirmed to contain PCB's. The chemical content of spills along more than 100 additional miles has not been determined.

The long chemical stripes began showing up in Alamance and Johnston counties last Wednesday and Thursday. As more spill locations were plotted this week, they appeared to be following a pattern along rural routes that branch off Interstate highways 85 and 95, the main north-south roads

through North Carolina, officials said.

"It's beginning to look more like this could be coming in from out of state," said Robert A. Carter, a state environmentalist heading the search for the pollution. "We're already talking to other states."

Some of the spills, now reported on a growing list of roads in Nash, Wilson, Warren, Franklin, Granville, Person, Wake, Johnston, Harnett, Lee, Chatham and Alamance counties, also follow patterns off U.S. 301.

At a news conference Wednesday, Natural Resources and Community Development Secretary Howard Lee labeled the apparently deliberate dumping of the chemical "an outrageous act."

"We're not taking it sitting down,"

said Lee in announcing that a reward of \$2,500 or more would be offered for information leading to the arrest of those responsible.

He said several state agencies — the Highway Patrol, attorney general's office, State Bureau of Investigation, Agriculture Department, Department of Transportation and departments of human resources and natural resources and community development — are working together on the investigation.

Meanwhile, Dr. Martin Hines, director of epidemiology, said persons who live along the routes of the spills should report any apparent reactions from the chemical to health officials.

However, he said it is highly unlikely that there would be any immediate reaction to exposure to PCB because effects are usually long-term and build up from eating or drinking the substance.

Hines said officials "can't say what the long-term effects would be" to ingesting PCB, but officials are monitoring wells, water supplies, cattle, crops and the air in the areas of the spills for the presence of the chemical.

Lee said there is no danger from traveling the highways where the spills occurred.

He also said there had been no decision on whether to try to scoop up the contaminated soil along shoulders of the highways to remove the chemical. There is some question about the economic feasibility of removing the soil as well as how to dispose of it without violating federal regulations, he said.