Officials confirm six more PCB spill areas

Officials at the Department of Natural Resources and Community Development said Saturday they had confirmed six more areas of PCB contamination stretching into nine North Carolina counties, bringing the confirmed roadside contamination to 250 miles.

Steve Meehan, a department spokesman, said PCB has now been found in 15 North Carolina counties. He said that all of the reported roadside spills, except one in the Edgecomb-Wilson area reported late Friday, had been confirmed to contain "almost pure PCB."

Meehan said he felt certain that area would also be found to contain PCB because it seemed to be part of another, already confirmed spill.

The Environmental Protection Agency laboratory in Athens, Ga., has confirmed the state's findings of PCB, Meehan said.

The result of soil tests that determined the strength of the PCB and its depth of penetration into the soil will be released Monday, Meehan said. Those tests will be the key factor in determining how much, if any, of the roadside dirt will need to be removed, he said.

Meehan said that chemists at the Environmental Management Laboratory were working Saturday until midnight and on Sunday to confirm roadside soil and water samples for PCB contamination.

In the criminal investigation of the spills, the SBI was gathering additional information on the tanker truck spotted dumping chemicals along N.C. 210 in Johnston County, bureau director Haywood Starling said. But Starling said he could not comment at this time on the nature of the information.

Haywood said citizens with information on the spills should call the 24-hour SBI numbers (919-779-1400 and, toll-free, 1-800-662-7616). "We are asking the public to give us continued support by calling us with any information they might have," Haywood said.

Ray E. Kelling, a supervisor with the human resources department, said Saturday that chemists had found three different types of PCB. "The PCB spillage could have been dropped from three different tankers of the same company or from three different companies," Kelling said.

— KATHY HART

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