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DNR Traces Contaminant In Lake Superior Trout

LANING (UPI) — The state Department of Natural Resources says it is trying to trace sources of an industrial chemical that department specialists found in "surprisingly" high levels in some Lake Superior trout.

The chemical is polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB), which is not connected in any way with PBB contamination that poisoned Michigan livestock last year.

Natural resources officials said Sunday they see no danger to humans who eat the contaminated trout in limited amounts.

"There is a possible danger," said Ralph Purdy, the agency's deputy director, "but only to somebody who eats these fish as part of their daily diet."

The state agency also reported increases in DDT and mercury levels.

The Lake Superior findings followed earlier discovery of PCB contamination in coho salmon and other fish in Lake Michigan. This led to state officials warn-

ing against eating fish from that Great Lake more than once a week.

It is possible, officials said, that the chemical came from Canadian companies at the north end of the lake.

PCB is a compound used chiefly in the electrical industry as transformer fluid and also in paints and lubricants.

John Scott, head of the Great Lakes fisheries section of the DNR, said the most serious contamination apparently was in the ciscoet, a heavy trout that lives in the lake's deeper waters. Ciscoet are high in fat, where contaminants are stored.

"Quite a few exceed the five parts per million guideline both in PCB and DDT," he said.

The limit was set after residents of a small Japanese village became seriously ill in 1970 when PCB was accidentally mixed with fish oil. Hundreds of persons subsequently became ill with skin and internal disorders and impaired vision.