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Weiss Lake to stay open; tests show no danger

MONTGOMERY—Weiss Lake will stay open for commercial fishing—at least for the time being. Samples of fish and water from the Weiss Reservoir on the Coosa River show "*no cause for alarm*" either to public health or the fish population, according to state water pollution control officials.

The announcement came from James W. Warr, chief administrative officer for the Alabama Water Improvement Commission (AWIC). The AWIC investigated on Aug. 18-19 and Sept. 7-8, after word spread there was a possibility of excessive PCB concentrations in the lake. PCB is an abbreviation for polychlorinated biphenyls, a compound similar to DDT which is said to cause cancer in laboratory animals.

Warr said the tests show some specimens of some fish species have more than the 5 parts per million of PCB that the U.S Food and Drug Administration considers safe, but none of the water samples so far exceeds safety limits.

Dr. Ira L. Myers, state health officer and chairman of AWIC, said, "Given the current dietary habits of the people of Alabama and the lack of evidence directly linking PCB with adverse effects on human health, no additional action is warranted at this time."

As a result, the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources has no plans to close Weiss Lake to commercial fishing.

WARR SAID Thursday's announcement followed conferences with the State Health Department and the Department of Conservation. The pattern of test results, he said, seems to show that the PCB concentrations in game fish are within FDA limits, while levels in commercial fish often exceed the limits.

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