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Chemical Pollution

The government's top doctor has asked the Environmental Protection Agency to stop industries from dumping a suspected cancer-causing chemical into waterbeds where it contaminates food fish.

"The recent findings in both the Hudson River and Lake Champlain of high levels of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) in food fish are of deep concern to us," said Dr. Theodore Cooper, deputy assistant secretary for health in the department of Health, Education and Welfare, in a letter to EPA Administrator Russell Train.

Cooper cited recent, unpublished studies confirming that PCBs has been shown to cause cancer in rats.

PCBs are a group of chemical compounds with worldwide industrial uses. In the United States they are often used in the manufacture of electrical transformers and capacitators.

Plants are allowed to dump PCB wastage into waterbeds in amounts limited by federal license. But Cooper said "the rationale for the continuing license to discharge PCBs into water where they may enter the food chain should be immediately re-evaluated."

From staff reports and news dispatches

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