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Polychlorinated Biphenyls Found in New York Fish

New York state consumers have been warned not to eat striped bass from the Hudson River or salmon from Lake Ontario because the fish may well be contaminated with polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB's).

The warning was issued last week by state environmental commissioner Ogden Reid and state Health Commissioner Robert Whelan after it was found that fish caught in both waterways had dangerous concentrations of PCB's in their tissues. Under Federal standards, foods containing more than 5 ppm of PCB's are deemed to be unsafe.

Fish caught near Fort Edward and Hudson Falls on the Hudson River were found

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PCB's in Fish

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by Federal scientists to have concentrations as high as 350 ppm. General Electric Company has plants in both locations. Commissioner Reid asserts that despite warnings, General Electric has been dumping forty-eight pounds of PCB's per day into the Hudson at Ft. Edward and Hudson Falls. Elsewhere on the Hudson, fish taken twenty miles upriver from New York City had an average of 5.7 ppm in their flesh. One fish examined had a concentration of 37 ppm.

Salmon taken from Lake Ontario, another New York State waterway, were found to have concentrations of from fifteen to twenty ppms.

Mr. Reid believes that GE has contributed to the contamination of Hudson River fish and that other companies are also involved. His department has asked Monsanto Chemical Company, the only US producer of PCB's for a list of its New York customers.

Use of PCB's is restricted to sealed system electrical transformers and capacitors.