



Health and Welfare
Canada

Santé et Bien-être social
Canada

Health Protection
Branch

Direction générale de la
protection de la santé

Bureau of Chemical Safety,
Ottawa, Ontario.
K1A 0L2

Your file Votre référence

August 24, 1981.

Our file Notre référence

Miss T. Vigod,
Canadian Environmental Law Association,
8 York St.,
5th Floor South,
TORONTO, Ontario M5J 1R2

Dear Miss Vigod,

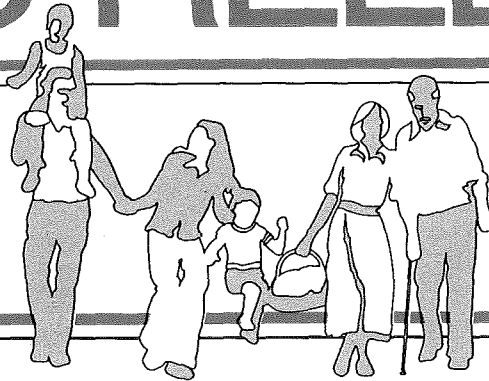
Mr. R. Read, Director, Bureau of Chemical Safety
has asked me to send you a copy of our News Release
on dioxins in commercial fish. Please note that the
News Release is a joint National Health & Welfare and
Fisheries and Oceans release.

Yours sincerely,

Donald L. Grant,
Pesticide Section,
Toxicological Evaluation Division.

Encl.

NEWS RELEASE



1981-84
July 17, 1981

DIOXIN GUIDELINE ANNOUNCED FOR COMMERCIAL FISH

Health and Welfare Minister Monique Bégin announced today the establishment of a guideline of 20 parts per trillion (ppt) 2,3,7,8-TCDD (dioxin) in commercial fish as part of the federal program of control of health hazards from environmental contaminants. The Minister noted that normal consumption of commercial fish from Lake Ontario containing up to 20 ppt dioxin would not pose any health hazard to consumers.

"The problem of contamination of certain waterways, particularly Lake Ontario, with dioxin and other chemicals is being addressed very seriously," Miss Bégin said. "Until the problem is solved, the federal government must continue to exercise control of commercial fisheries to prevent health hazards to consumers."

The federal decision was announced after Ottawa meetings, the latest phase of the Canadian-United States cooperative investigation into dioxin contamination of the Great Lakes (initiated in December 1980), which involved joint review of data from federal, Ontario and New York State sources.

Federal scientists checked for the presence of dioxin in white and yellow perch, white sucker, brown bullhead, sunfish, crappies, rock bass, yellow pickerel, smelt, eel, and catfish in Lake Ontario. Only smelt and eel were found in some cases to contain levels of dioxin in excess of the guideline.

Commenting on the guideline, Fisheries and Oceans Minister Roméo LeBlanc noted that "Because fish containing high levels of dioxin were generally found to also show high PCB levels, sale of commercial species from the areas affected has already been prohibited under existing PCB limit regulations".

The data currently available suggest that the problem is restricted to Lake Ontario. It is not anticipated that commercial fisheries in other areas will be affected.

The long-term plans of the federal government for dealing with the issue include further research into the extent of dioxin contamination and a program to ensure compliance with the guideline. There will be continued cooperation with United States Federal and State authorities, and Canadian provinces.

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