

# LAKE CHAMPLAIN COMMITTEE

## PCBs and You

*Plattsburgh's Municipal Beech & Wilcox Dock areas are threatened by toxic PCBs. Up to 1850 ppm have been found in sludge beds in Cumberland Bay (over 50 ppm is defined as hazardous waste).*

### Public Meeting on PCBs and the Cumberland Bay Sludge Bed

Saturday, March 29 from 1:30 - 4:00 PM

Cardinal Lounge of Angell College Center/SUNY Plattsburgh

*Sponsored by the Lake Champlain Committee and SUNY Plattsburgh*

### Meeting Agenda 1:30 - 4:00 PM

Welcome and overview.

Dr. Robert Fuller  
SUNY Plattsburgh

PCBs: What are they, what do they look like, why should we be concerned about them and what is the status of PCBs in the Lake

Bob Edwards  
NYS DEC

Background on the Cumberland Bay PCB Site and overview of the clean-up options being investigated

Dr. John Hawley  
NYS Dept. of Health

The Cumberland Bay Site and human health implications

Josh Cleland  
Scenic Hudson

Cleaning up PCBs: examples of successful dredging and removal efforts

Ann Casey  
SUNY Research Fdn.

The past, present and future of research on human health effects

*The meeting will be moderated by Dr. Malcolm Fairweather of SUNY Plattsburgh and will allow ample time for questions and discussion.*

This spring the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC) will release recommendations for clean-up actions at the Cumberland Bay Hazardous Waste Site. The Lake Champlain Committee and State University of New York at Plattsburgh are hosting an informational meeting on the PCB site to enable citizens to understand the issue and respond to NYS DEC recommendations. Public comments will influence future actions. Please attend the 3:29 meeting and stay involved in this important community issue.

### Background

The Cumberland Bay Sludge Bed is located in Lake Champlain's Cumberland Bay within the City of Plattsburgh. Environmental sampling performed between 1992 and 1994 confirmed the presence of high levels of polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) contamination in the sludge bed. PCBs are environmentally persistent carcinogenic compounds and have no natural sources. They were produced and widely used in industrialized countries for five decades prior to 1980. Because they don't burn easily and are a good insulating material, PCBs were used extensively as coolants and lubricants in transformers, capacitors and other electrical equipment. They were also used in products such as carbonless carbon paper and flexible plastics. Domestic manufacture of PCBs was banned in 1977 because of evidence that they build up in the environment and cause harmful effects.

Concerned about the environmental and human health effects of the sludge bed, in 1992 LCC urged the NYS DEC to post the site, assess and quantify the extent of contamination and begin a clean-up effort. NYS DEC

conducted additional analyses and found that the wood debris washing up on the public and private beaches was also contaminated with PCBs. The site was added to the State's Registry of Inactive Hazardous Waste Sites in 1994. To date, approximately 200 tons of PCB-contaminated wood chips have been removed from nearby beaches.

The sludge bed contains approximately 93,000 cubic yards of contaminated solid waste. PCBs have been found throughout the 34-acre site with levels up to 1,850 parts per million (ppm - levels above 50 ppm are considered hazardous waste by legal definition). The site may be a significant contributor of PCE contamination for Lake Champlain fish. There is a fish consumption advisory in effect for several species within Cumberland Bay due to elevated levels of PCEs. In 1995, commercial sales of yellow perch from the Bay was prohibited.

This is a critical community issue with far-reaching environmental and human health implications. LCC and SUNY Plattsburgh are hosting the March 29 Information Session to keep citizens informed of the issues.

#### **If You Can't Attend the Meeting on 3/29**

Contact LCC at (802) 658-1414 if you are unable to attend the meeting. We'll make sure you get information on NYS DEC's clean-up recommendations and the deadline for public comments. Your participation is necessary to ensure that the clean-up action taken protects the Lake and human health.

#### **Directions to the 3/29 Meeting at Angell College Center, SUNY Plattsburgh**

From the West - Take Route 11 to Ellenburg Corners, Military Turnpike. Turn right onto the Military Turnpike (Route 190) and continue to the end at its intersection with Route 3. Turn left on Route 3 and follow it to Burger King on the right. At the light, the road breaks into two streets. Bear to the right (Broad Street). Go to the third traffic light, turn right into Kehoe Administration Building area and parking lot. Parking at the rear of the lot (nearest Ruger Street) is within walking distance to the Center. OR Continue through the lot to Ruger Street. Take a right onto Ruger St. and an immediate left into a parking lot which is directly across from Angell College Center.

From the North & South - Take I-87 to Exit 37. From Exit 37 ramp, make a right hand turn onto Route 3 and follow Route 3 to Burger King on the right (traffic light here). Follow the underlined directions above.

From Vermont - Take Interstate 89 North to Exit 17. Exit 17 will bring you to Route 2 which you will follow through North and South Hero to Route 314 (approximately 12 miles). Turn left on Route 314 to ferry dock (approximately 2 miles). Leaving ferry dock, continue straight on Route 314. Proceed to traffic light and continue straight to Interstate-87 South (approximately 4 miles from ferry dock). Proceed south on Interstate-87 to Exit 37 and follow the underlined directions above.

#### **Contribute to LCC's Clean Water Campaign**

Send an appeal gift to the Lake Champlain Committee. Your gift will be put directly to work for our advocacy for a cleaner Lake Champlain. LCC is a non-profit (501c3) organization and contributions are tax-deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

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