

October 28, 1988

Ms. Lyndsay Green 158 Cottingham Street Toronto, Ontario M4V 1C3

Dear Ms. Green:

I have just completed reviewing the information you sent to our office regarding PCBs in mothers' breast milk. I wish I were writing to offer you advice or recommendations. Unfortunately, we are just as much in the dark about the extent to which other women's milk may be contaminated and the effects of this contamination as you and Health and Welfare Canada are.

I can say from experience that the access to information about testing and risks is no better in the U.S. After our daughter was born this summer, I made several attempts to have my wife's milk tested because I had heard about either your situation or other women's situations via Sarah Miller, a GLU Board member from Toronto. I was unable to even find a laboratory that could test milk for PCBs though I admit that I did not try as persistently as you did. Part of the reason I did not pursue our case further was exactly the issues you have articulated: even if we had found levels of PCBs in my wife's milk, there is scarcely any data on which to make an informed judgement about whether the benefits of breast milk would outweigh the exposure to PCBs.

Your recommendations to Health and Welfare are on target. If more women were easily able to find out how much PCBs are in the milk their babies are getting, then our health agencies would be pressured to generate some answers to the questions you pose about the risks of exposure.

I assume you have shared your information and sought the advice of Dr. Kate Davies with the Toronto Department of Health. If you have not her address is Dr. Kate Davies, Director, Environmental Protection Bureau, Department of Public Health, 12 Shuter Street, Toronto, M5B 1A1.

I will soon be leaving Great Lakes United to take a position with the National Wildlife Federation's Great Lakes office in Ann Arbor, Michigan. One of the staff members in that office, Barbara Glenn, is a human health specialist. She is working on a project to define safe levels of human exposure to Great Lakes fish and I'm sure she is familiar with the research on this subject. I will share your information with her and if she has any suggestions I will relay them to you.

"An international organization dedicated to conserving and protecting the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River"

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I commend your efforts and encourage you to keep posing tough questions to the governments. I would appreciate it if you would keep me informed of your progress. My address after December 15, 1988 will be: Great Lakes Natural Resource Center, National Wildlife Federation, 802 Monroe, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104.

Very truly yours,

Tim Eder

Field Coordinator

cc. Sarah Miller Kate Davies