For Immediate Release

news release
From The Texas Department of Health
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Health Commissioner Advises "Zero Consumption" of Fish from Clear Creek

Dr. David R. Smith, Texas Commissioner of Health, has issued an immediate warning against consuming fish taken from Clear Creek, which borders Harris, Brazoria and Galveston counties and flows into Clear Lake southeast of Houston. The affected area includes all of Clear Creek upstream and west of Texas Highway 3.

The Texas Department of Health (TDH) has found that samples of fish caught in portions of Clear Creek near the former Brio Refinery Company, a U.S Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Superfund site, contain at least two suspected cancer-causing chemicals and another chemical that has been shown to cause nervous disorders.

Initial test results on samples collected Nov. 10 and 11 were completed Wednesday.

The three chemicals, all of which are industrial solvents, include dichloroethane and trichloroethane--both of which are believed to cause cancers of the liver and kidneys--and carbon disulfide, which can cause nervous disorders.

Dr. Smith said that TDH intends to conduct extensive further sampling of fish from the area to learn the extent of contamination. TDH also will request financial assistance from EPA. In the meantime, his advice is "zero consumption" of any species of fish or crabs from the area.

"Because these contaminants are thought to cause such serious health problems with long-term exposure, these test results are of serious concern. We advise that no one eat fish or crabs from Clear Creek until further notice. Meanwhile, TDH and the Texas Natural Resources Conservation Commission, with the help of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, will continue to investigate this problem," Dr. Smith said.

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(For more information, contact Richard Thompson, Director, Shellfish Sanitation Control Division, at 512/458-7510 or Margaret Wilson, Director, Public Information Office, at 512/458-7405.)

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