

Date:

Dear Assemblyman or Senator

The French Hill Elementary School in the Yorktown Central School District in Westchester, New York has both window caulking and soil contaminated with hazardous levels of PCB surrounding its perimeter.

If it can happen at Yorktown Heights, it can happen anywhere, and it did.

In an investigative study by Dr. Bob Herrick published by the Harvard School of Public Health in the summer of 2004, Dr. Herrick took samples of caulking from schools and public buildings in Boston and found high levels of PCB in a number of samples. In some cases, the PCB content was nearly 1000 times the EPA standards of 50 parts per million. Dr. Herrick was prompted to do his study based on studies done in Switzerland, Sweden and Germany that found a link between PCBs in caulking and PCBs in the air. These studies found elevated levels in the blood of the people who live in the apartment buildings, and the teachers and the children that are in those buildings.

In response to the Harvard study, television station KIRO TV in Seattle, Washington did investigative reporting on this subject. Testing of schools in the Seattle case found elevated PCB in the caulking. In Rhode Island, investigators found high levels of indoor PCB that was traced back to the window caulking. The EPA ordered the Rhode Island school to clean up the PCBs. This is just a tip of the iceberg.

What is so disturbing is that the EPA is taking no initiative for mandatory testing for PCB, especially in schools. The EPA knows the dangers of PCB and how toxic it is to our children. The EPA knows that caulking can have high levels of PCB. After 30 years these materials are deteriorating and just touching it may cause exposure. The EPA's attitude is that if you test for it and find high levels, someone will now have to clean it up. As long as you don't test, you will never know. Why open a Pandora's box. This is an unacceptable position.

It is apparent that many state health departments take their lead from the EPA. If the EPA doesn't recommend testing, they will follow suit and not recommend testing. For example, though a summary statement of Dr Herrick's report did appear in the New York State Education Department's October 2004 newsletter, and provided a web link for the article, there were no directives, or recommendations, mandatory or otherwise for testing window caulking for PCB. According to the State Education Department, "this is just information passed on to the school districts so they can make informed decisions when completing maintenance and construction projects on their buildings".

In other words, if the school doesn't want to test caulking, they do not have to do anything. So if a contractor or custodian works on a window or scrapes window caulking, we will never know whether he exposed himself to PCB or released toxic levels into the school environment. It is the law that before any renovation is done, schools have to test for lead and asbestos. For a toxic material, such as PCB, it is up to the discretion of the school. This is appalling!!

I am requesting that you take the lead and make this a health issue. There needs to be regulations regarding *immediate mandatory testing* for PCB in schools, as well as our public buildings, regardless of whether or not renovation is an issue. In addition to mandatory testing, there must be a standardized comprehensive program to remove all PCB-laden caulk.

The law mandates children to attend school. We must mandate laws to protect them.

I eagerly await the opportunity to speak with you regarding this matter.

Sincerely,