



JOHN ENGLER, Governor

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY HEALTH**

LEWIS CASS BUILDING

LANSING, MICHIGAN 48913

JAMES K. HAVEMAN, JR., Director

January 14, 1998

Wayne A. Schmidt, Director  
Great Lakes Natural Resource Center  
National Wildlife Federation  
506 E. Liberty Street  
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104

Tracey Easthope, Director  
Environmental Health Project  
Ecology Center of Ann Arbor  
117 N. Division  
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104

Mary Beth Doyle, M.P.H.  
Coordinator  
Michigan Environmental Health Coalition  
117 N. Division  
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104

Dave Dempsey, Policy Director  
Michigan Environmental Council  
119 Pere Marquette, Suite 2A  
Lansing, Michigan 48912

Dear Michigan Environmental Council:

The department's decision regarding advisories reflects appropriate and well-thought-out policy. A commitment to consolidate the entire body of fish consumption advice into a single comprehensive publication is the result of an agreement with the legislature in the spring. Central to this agreement was a commitment to include warning advice for women and children in the fishing guide.

Your concerns appear to confuse the fish consumption advisory with the fishing guide and the practice of including elements of the fish advisory in the fishing guide. The advice contained in the Michigan Fishing Guide, which is published by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), was six pages in length last year. It included charts of specific advisories for each of the Great Lakes watersheds, brief trimming advice, and a general advisory about mercury.

The department made a commitment to the legislature that the 1998 advisory would improve and expand fish consumption advice. In fact, the 1998 advisory is expected to be approximately 32 pages in length, approximately 26 pages more than the advice included in the 1997 fishing guide.

Our goal is to provide more complete advice to more people. Providing additional advice on fish consumption in an attractive stand-alone document enables the department to provide more complete information to more people and to focus on the people who prepare the fish as well as those who catch the fish.

The fish consumption advisory publication will contain the following:

- charts of specific advisories for each of the Great Lakes watersheds using the 0.05 micrograms per kilogram per day PCB health protection value for women of childbearing age and children under 15
- special information for women of childbearing age and children under 15
- information about the benefits of safe fish consumption in compliance with the fish advisories
- advisories on mercury in more than 200 inland lakes
- instructions on proper trimming and cooking techniques to remove as much as 90 percent of any remaining contaminants in fish

This full advisory, as you refer to it, was never included in the DNR fishing guide due to space limitations. Therefore, it would be difficult to eliminate it, as you erroneously suggest we have done. It is important for you to note that the DNR fishing guide will continue to include general information about fish advisories, including stronger cautions for women, as was promised in our agreement with the legislature. It will also contain specific directions for obtaining the fish advisory publication or for accessing the information on-line via the web.

The demand that this extensive advice be included in the fishing guide is neither practical nor advisable. If combined, it would create a publication of approximately 100 pages. It would also have distribution implications. A combined publication would include fishing guide information that is not needed by WIC clinics and doctors' offices, a distribution channel that is most appropriate to the potentially vulnerable target segments of women and children. Also, in collaboration with the DNR, the department will provide this publication to the fishing license vendors in amounts equal to the number of DNR fishing guides that are supplied to each vendor. If a vendor needs additional quantities, they may order the publication by telephone. A total of approximately 1.5 million copies of the fish advisory will be distributed through these channels.

To help avoid any further controversy over this advice, perhaps we should meet to discuss your concerns. If that is an option you would like to pursue, please contact my office at 517-335-0267 to arrange a mutually convenient time.

Cordially,



James K. Haveman, Jr.

JKH:hkl