

July 10, 1997



news release

TDH Website: www.tdh.state.tx

From The Texas Department of Health
1100 West 49th Street Austin, Texas 78756 (512) 458-7400

TDH Lifts Fish Consumption Advisory for Lower Brazos River

The Texas Department of Health (TDH) has lifted a consumption advisory in effect since 1990 that advised against eating fish taken from the lower Brazos River below FM 521 in Brazoria County on the Texas coast.

"The bottom line is that people fishing the lower Brazos River can now eat their fish without wondering if they're safe," said Kirk Wiles with TDH's Seafood Safety Division.

The 1990 advisory was issued because of elevated levels of dioxins in the fish. Dioxins are chemical compounds suspected of causing cancer, liver abnormalities and reproductive problems when consumed regularly over an extended time period.

A DOW Chemical plant in Freeport was identified as a source of the dioxin compounds in the lower Brazos River fish. DOW cooperated with state and federal officials and addressed the dioxin release problem. DOW also reimbursed TDH \$52,200 for the cost of retesting the fish.

These reevaluation tests showed negligible dioxin levels in the fish. The tests also found no other chemicals that would make the fish unsafe for consumption.

Wiles called the episode "a good example of regulatory authorities and industry working together to solve a problem with little cost to the taxpayer."

No other fish consumption advisories are in effect for any portion of the Brazos River.

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(For more information, contact: Kirk Wiles, Seafood Safety Division, at 512-719-0215; or Doug McBride, TDH Public Information Officer, at 512-458-7111, Ext. 2214.)