



## **Excess Mercury Levels Increasing; Survey Shows Fifth of Women of Childbearing Age Are Affected**

The study, which was commissioned by an environmental advocacy group offers the latest evidence of how much mercury Americans are absorbing by eating fish. Coal-fired power plants and other sources release mercury into the air, which ends up in water and is absorbed by fish.

Source: Washington Post, October 21, 2004

# **Daily Environment**

**REPORT**

## **Researchers See Link Between Respiratory Disease, Exposure to POPs**

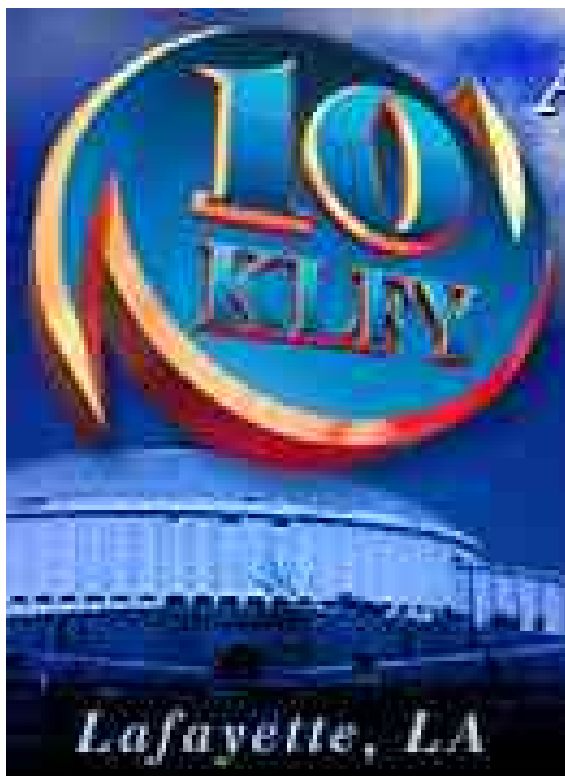
Researchers from the University at Albany say they have found increased incidences of respiratory disease among New Yorkers who live near certain hazardous waste sites, suggesting that there may be a link between suppression of the immune system and exposure to polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and other persistent organic pollutants (POPs). The study examines the diseases of hospitalized patients who live near hazardous waste sites containing PCBs, persistent pesticides, and other POPs. The researchers say the rates of hospitalization for bronchitis and other infectious respiratory diseases for those residents is about 20 percent higher than the rate for the general population of the state.

**Source: Daily Environment Report, BNA Inc. 12/10/04**

## **EPA Science Panel Backs Software That May Sharpen Risk Reviews**

EPA science advisors have given their preliminary blessing to software for gauging pesticide exposure whose designers as well as agency and industry sources claim has the potential to revamp exposure assessments for any number of chemical toxins by eliminating the need for safety factors.

The software has attracted the support of both environmentalists and industry as a way to avoid protracted disputes about the assumptions EPA uses in determining the potential public health risks from environmental toxins. The agency typically applies one safety factor in its risk assessments to compensate for the uncertainties inherent in extrapolating human health hazards from animal data, and another to account for differences across the human population.



## **Unacceptable levels of arsenic discovered in wells, DEQ says**

COW ISLAND, La. Testing done by the state Department of Environmental Quality shows that several private water wells in the Cow Island area of southern Vermilion Parish have unacceptable levels of arsenic.

D-E-Q completed the testing after complaints from residents who believe that the high levels of arsenic might be contributing to what they say are high rates of cancer in the area.

**Source: New Orleans Channel 10 KLFY 12/10/04**