

United States Senate

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November 6, 2015

The Honorable Gina McCarthy
Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency
Office of the Administrator
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460

The Honorable Curt Spalding
Region 1 Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency
5 Post Office Square - Suite 100
Boston, MA 02109-3912

Dear Administrator McCarthy and Regional Administrator Spalding,

As you know, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) continue to present a potential environmental concern for communities across the United States. In Connecticut, there have been documented cases of PCB contamination in Fairfield, Southington, Wallingford and, most recently, the City of Hartford.

The full extent of PCB prevalence in Connecticut schools is still unknown. In August 2015, WNPR released findings from its investigation regarding PCBs. The results of the investigation showed that two-thirds of Connecticut schools may contain the chemicals. The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's data suggest that the majority of the schools with confirmed PCB findings since 2009 have been found in urban areas. However, no definitive list of Connecticut schools contaminated by PCBs exists. Rather, we only have best guesses as to which schools most likely contain PCBs based on the year of their construction and other variables.

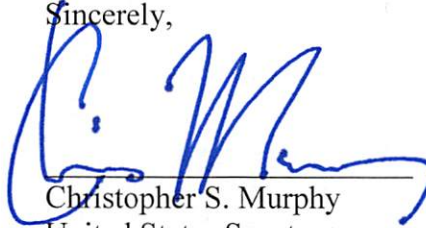
The burden of both the fact-finding and the mitigation efforts fall heavily on local schools and communities. Therefore, I ask you for your assistance to:

1. Provide recommendations on how your agency can help ease the burden for local schools and communities dealing with PCBs; and
2. Provide up-to-date resources and best practices to municipalities and schools for their mitigation efforts.

I am aware that PCB production was banned by Congress nearly four decades ago and that schools built after this prohibition likely do not contain the compound. I also understand that contamination is most frequently triggered by building construction and renovation. There are many schools across Connecticut that are undergoing renovations and could encounter PCBs as a result of these renovations. It is my position that the federal government should encourage school construction projects, and PCBs often make such construction cost prohibitive—at the expense of the children those schools serve.

The basic tenet that our schools should be safe places of learning for our children must be upheld. I hope that your answers will help inform the public and policymakers about the extent of the problem in Connecticut and the best ways to mitigate any harm. I look forward to your response and to working with you.

Sincerely,



Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator

CC: Commissioner Rob Klee
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