

Mercury reduction tied to emissions laws

April 3 2006

Seven years after Massachusetts passed the nation's toughest mercury emission incinerator laws, mercury found in some freshwater fish is down 32 percent.

Although a significant number of the state's inland fish remain unsafe to eat, state officials and environmentalists say they are astounded by the reduction in mercury levels found in yellow perch from lakes near a cluster of incinerators in the northeast corner of the state, The Boston Globe reported Monday.

Scientists say the reduction in mercury levels is about half that needed before the fish are safe to eat. Perch is used as an indicator species since the fish accumulates high levels of mercury.

Massachusetts is continuing its warning that women of childbearing age and children should not eat fish from the state's lakes and streams, the Globe said.

Mercury can cause severe neurological damage in children and fetuses.

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