



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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**CITY OF CHICAGO FILES LAWSUIT AGAINST MONSANTO FOR PCB
CONTAMINATION IN THE CITY AND ITS WATERWAYS**

The sale and promotion of PCB products led to soil and sediment contamination, creating a health threat for the City's residents and its fish and wildlife

CHICAGO – Mayor Brandon Johnson and Corporation Counsel Mary B. Richardson-Lowry announced today that the City of Chicago has filed a lawsuit against Monsanto Co., three of its corporate successors, and a local distributor, for releasing polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) into the City's air, water, and soil. The City alleges that Monsanto and its co-defendants released these chemicals and misled the public despite knowing that PCBs are dangerous contaminants that have been found to cause significant harm to humans and the environment. The complaint, filed in Cook County Circuit Court, seeks damages for the City's expenses associated with the cleanup and remediation of PCB contamination in the City and its waterways.

"Monsanto knew for decades that its commercial PCB formulations were highly toxic and would inevitably produce precisely the contamination and human health risks that have occurred, perpetuating the environmental abuse and stark inequities so many of Chicago's neighborhoods have long suffered from," **said Mayor Brandon Johnson**. "This action reflects the City's commitment to protecting our current and future residents, as well as our natural resources, from the harm caused by Monsanto, and creating a more sustainable environment for us all."

"Records show that Monsanto intentionally misled the public despite knowing the dangers PCBs posed to the environment," **said Corporation Counsel Richardson-Lowry**. "We bring this lawsuit to ensure that the polluters are held accountable for their actions and bear the financial burden of the response efforts required to address the PCB contamination."



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“Environmental justice is a fundamental right for all residents in our City. We must use all available tools, including litigation, to stand up against those who put profit before people,” **said Angela Tovar, Chief Sustainability Officer.**

PCBs are synthetic chemical compounds that were widely used for a variety of industrial and household applications such as paint and varnishes, electrical equipment, caulk, insecticides, coolants, and sealants. As a result of the sales of PCB products in and around Chicago, there is significant contamination within the City. This contamination is in Lake Michigan, in the banks and sediment of the Chicago River, and at sites throughout the City.

While PCBs were banned by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the late 1970s, the chemicals are still present in the environment today. PCBs have entered the air, water, sediments, and soil through manufacturing, PCB spills and leaks, and the disposal and discharge of PCB wastes into sewers and landfills. PCBs can also enter water bodies through stormwater runoff containing contaminated soil. Fish become contaminated with PCBs by living near contaminated sediment or by consuming contaminated prey.

Humans, in turn, are exposed to PCBs primarily from eating contaminated food, breathing contaminated air, and drinking or swimming in contaminated water. PCB exposure has been shown to cause adverse health effects, including alterations to the liver, thyroid, immune and reproductive systems, and reduced birth weight. PCBs have also been linked to cancer.

To address PCB contamination, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency places limits on daily discharges of PCBs from Chicago waterways into the portion of Lake Michigan that abuts Chicago. New rules require Chicago to reduce its PCB discharges by an estimated 99.6%. The City seeks to recover the significant costs the City will incur to comply with these daily limits, to monitor and address contamination already in its waterways, and to obtain cleanup and remediation costs for contaminated sites throughout the City as they become known.

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