In response to the dioxin and PCB problem, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) and Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC) initiated a total maximum daily load (TMDL) project in the Houston Ship Channel and Upper Galveston Bay to:

- Pinpoint sources of dioxin and PCBs.
- Develop an action plan to reduce dioxin.

The Houston Ship Channel Stakeholders Group is advising the TCEQ and H-GAC on this project. The group includes representatives from government, industrial facilities, agriculture, business, environmental, and community interests in the Houston Ship Channel and Galveston Bay watersheds.

### For More Information

- [www.dshs.state.tx.us/seafood](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/seafood)
- [512-834-6757](tel:512-834-6757)
- [www.h-gac.com/dioxintmdl](http://www.h-gac.com/dioxintmdl)
- [http://galvbay.org/advocacy_seafood.html](http://galvbay.org/advocacy_seafood.html)
- [www.tceq.state.tx.us/implementation/water/tmdl/26-houston_group.html](http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/implementation/water/tmdl/26-houston_group.html)
Dioxin is a term for a group of toxic chemicals found throughout the environment. Dioxin has no known constructive use and is a byproduct of certain industrial activities. Exhaust from vehicles, forest fires, and burning trash also release dioxin into the air.

PCBs, or polychlorinated biphenyls, are man-made chemicals. PCB production was banned in the 1970s, however, the chemicals continue to enter the environment through spills, leaks and improper disposal.

Dioxin and PCBs build up in fish as they filter tainted sediment or water, or eat contaminated aquatic life forms.

Seafood Consumption Advisory
The Texas Department of State Health Services has issued seafood consumption advisories for the Houston Ship Channel and Galveston Bay.

- Adults should eat no more than one eight-ounce meal per month of seafood from these areas.
- Women who are nursing, pregnant, or who may become pregnant, and children under twelve years old, should not eat seafood from these areas.

Seafood May Contain Dioxin and PCBs
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Potential Health Problems from Repeated Exposure
- Increased cancer risks
- Immune system issues
- Liver damage
- Thyroid disorders
- Type 2 diabetes
- Digestive tract issues
- Fatigue and headaches
- Skin sores and headaches
- Nerve disorders (motor skill problems)
- Endometriosis and irregular menstrual cycles
- Birth defects
- Reduced fertility
- Child learning and developmental defects

Fish and Blue Crabs that May Contain Dioxin or PCBs
- Fatty fish (like catfish)
- Fish caught near industrial areas

The glands and organs of fish and blue crab caught in the Houston Ship Channel and Galveston Bay may contain high levels of contaminants and should not be eaten.

Reduce Your Exposure to Toxins
- Eat fish from a variety of water bodies to reduce risk of exposure to any one contaminant or group of contaminants.
- Eat a mix of different kinds of fish.
- Eat smaller, younger fish. (Younger fish usually have less contaminants than larger, older fish.)
- Practice “catch and release” fishing.