

## NOAA Report Calls Flame Retardants Major Concern to U.S. Coastal Ecosystems

NOAA's Center for Coastal Monitoring and Assessment (CCMA) released the first-ever comprehensive report stating that polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs), commonly used in commercial goods as flame retardants since the 1970s, are found in United States coastal waters, including the Great Lakes, with elevated levels near urban and industrial centers. The report is based on research conducted by NOAA's "Mussel Watch" program, the longest-running contaminant monitoring program in U.S. waters. Worldwide, laboratory studies suggest that human health may be impaired by PBDEs. In the CCMA study, the highest concentrations of PBDEs were detected in the waters around Los Angeles and New York City. Because the application of PBDEs has been so widespread – including in many consumer plastics, textiles, electronics, and furniture – scientists have concerns that these contaminants may present an ongoing and growing problem in coastal environments.

National Ocean Service Website News <http://oceanservice.noaa.gov/news/weeklynews/>