

NEWS RELEASE

 **PORT OF PORTLAND**
Box 3529 Portland OR 97208
503.415.6000

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Steve Johnson • 503.415.6591 • steve.johnson@portofportland.com

Port of Portland files lawsuit against Monsanto for PCBs

The Port of Portland has filed a lawsuit in U.S. District Court in Oregon against Monsanto Company for widespread PCB contamination impacting Port properties. The Port is the 10th public entity in the West to sue Monsanto for PCB contamination. The U.S. District Court case number is 17-cv-00015, filed Jan. 4, 2017.

Monsanto was the sole manufacturer of PCBs for more than 40 years (1935-1979). PCBs were banned by the federal government in 1979, but persist in the environment. They are associated with extensive human health impacts, including cancer and damage to immune, reproductive and endocrine systems.

PCBs were widely used in industrial and commercial businesses and are found in paint and caulk, in electric transformers and capacitors, in wire and cable coatings, and in coolants, sealants and lubricants.

The Port has evidence that Monsanto became aware of how toxic and dangerous PCBs were during the time they manufactured their PCB containing products, and that they concealed that information.

“Any decision to conceal facts about human health should have consequences,” said Curtis Robinhold, Port of Portland deputy executive director. “Monsanto reaped huge profits from the manufacture and sale of PCBs, and it is entirely appropriate for those faced with the cost of cleaning up this contamination to hold them accountable.”

“It’s time Monsanto do the right thing and contribute to the clean-up of their own toxic chemicals,” said John Fiske, an attorney hired to help prosecute the case.

PCBs are the primary contaminant driving cleanup in the Lower Willamette River and the Portland Harbor Superfund site. The Port has invested millions of dollars studying the legacy contamination in and along the Willamette River and Portland Harbor. However, the impact of PCB contamination is broader than the Superfund site, including McBride Slough at Portland International Airport.

The Port is represented by the national law firm of Baron & Budd, P.C. and Gomez Trial Attorneys, which also represent the cities of Portland, Seattle, Spokane, San Jose, Oakland, Berkeley, Long Beach, San Diego, and the State of Washington.

For more information please contact John Fiske at Fiske@BaronBudd.com or 619-261-4090.

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