January 28, 2002

Dear Pastor:

During the summer of 2001, the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality mailed a letter to you regarding an advisory to limit the amounts of certain types of fish consumed in your area. We want to thank you for taking the time to assist us by sharing the letter within your community. Now, we are again asking for your help in getting this important information out to the community by reading the enclosed announcement and making copies of the enclosed flier and inserting them into your bulletin. We also ask that you display the enclosed poster in a visible location in your building.

We issued the advisory because of tests conducted on fish taken from throughout the Delta. These tests revealed elevated levels of two pesticides, DDT and Toxaphene. Scientific studies have shown that individuals who regularly eat these fish over a long period of time could harm their health. Our recommendation is that people should eat no more than two (2) meals per month of buffalo, gar, carp, and large catfish (greater than 22 inches in length) caught in Mississippi Delta waters from the Mississippi River levee on the west to the bluff hills on the east. We also recommend that individuals not eat any buffalo fish caught in Roebuck Lake in Leflore County.

Most game fish like crappie, largemouth bass, bream, drum, and small catfish (less than 22 inches in length), as well as farm-raised catfish are not included in this advisory.

Fish is a good, low fat source of protein and an important part of a balanced diet for most people. We encourage people in the Delta to include fish in their diet, but to follow the advisory to minimize any health risks. Thank you for your assistance in getting the word out about this advisory. If you have any questions, would like to get more copies of the poster or bulletin insert, or would like for someone to speak to your community about the advisory, please call toll free at 1-888-786-0661 or 601-961-5171.

Sincerely,

Phil Bass, Director
Office of Pollution Control

Enclosures