



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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Calling for a Comprehensive Plan to Rid Our Schools of PCB Contamination

THOMAS K. DUANE February 19, 2011

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Nearly three years have passed since dangerous levels of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) were discovered in P.S 199 on West 70 Street and a number of other New York City public schools. While much progress has been made in remediating contamination at a few select schools, it is unacceptable that there is still no City-wide plan to address this problem. The Bloomberg administration's intransigence is particularly disturbing in light of clear evidence of PCB leakage from light ballasts in schools built or substantially renovated between 1950 and 1978.

On February 18, I joined Congressman Jerrold Nadler, Assemblymember Linda Rosenthal and other elected officials in sending a letter to Mayor Bloomberg calling on the City to immediately implement a plan to eliminate PCB contamination in all potentially-affected public schools and specifically to remove and replace all affected light ballasts within two to five years. While the City subsequently announced a plan to replace these ballasts, it said it would do so within ten years—an unjustifiably long time period during which young children and other members of affected school communities will be exposed to this dangerous toxin. I will continue to work with school stakeholders, advocates and elected officials to expedite PCB remediation and ensure that our school environments are safe.