

Oneida Lake Association

Position Statement

Subject: MTBE

As of July, 1999, 5-10% of public drinking water supplies in the United States contained MTBE. Many say that these levels are, in most cases, too low to pose a health threat. Even low levels, however, cause taste and odor problems. Also, no definitive research exists that determines all of MTBE's effects on people.

In 1998, MTBE was placed on the EPA's list of "contaminants of concern." The EPA, however, has not set an enforceable drinking water standard for MTBE contamination. No one knows what the limit should be!

MTBE comes from leaking oil storage tanks, gasoline spills that enter surface water and the ground, and recreational watercraft that emit unburned fuels. All of these conditions occur on and around Oneida Lake. They are state, and national, problems.

California and Maine have banned MTBE. To protect ground and surface waters, we believe that New York should follow these states' positive leads.