



Toxic Times

A weekly recap of the top stories on toxics in Michigan and beyond.

News Highlights from April 1, 2009 – April 7, 2009

MICHIGAN NEWS

Toxic canal cleanup stalls

The Detroit News, Wednesday, April 1, 2009

The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality has sent an unreleased report to the U.S. EPA to ask that the 10 Mile drain and two connecting canals in St. Clair Shores be listed as a Superfund site. Seven years and \$10 million have not removed hazardous polychlorinated biphenyls from the area.

<http://www.detroitnews.com/article/20090401/METRO/904010365/Toxic+canal+cleanup+stalls>

Bay City, Essexville, Saginaw plants report sewage overflows

The Bay City News, Monday, April 6, 2009

Large volumes of storm runoff caused sewage from three treatment plants to overflow into the Saginaw River.

http://www.mlive.com/news/bay-city/index.ssf/2009/04/bay_city_essexville_saginaw_pl.html

NATIONAL NEWS

Flame retardants in dust may alter men's hormone levels

Environmental Health News, Wednesday, April 1, 2009

New research revealed that men who have high concentrations of polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs)—a group of chemicals used as flame retardants—in the dust in their homes may have lower levels of testosterone. The chemicals have been shown to mimic estrogen and interfere with testosterone in animal studies.

<http://www.environmentalhealthnews.org/ehs/newscience/PBDEs-may-alter-hormone-levels-in-men/>

Are some chemicals more dangerous at low doses?

Scientific American Blog, Friday, April 3, 2009

“The dose makes the poison” has long been the standard in determining a chemical's toxicity. However, recent research is showing that some chemicals may have no safe levels, while others are capable of producing more pronounced effects at low levels.

<http://www.sciam.com/blog/60-second-science/post.cfm?id=are-some-chemicals-more-dangerous-a-2009-04-03>

Concerns raised about coastal levels of flame-retardant chemicals

The Los Angeles Times, Wednesday, April 1, 2009

A new report by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration revealed the presence of polybrominated diphenyl ethers—chemical flame retardants that have been linked to thyroid and reproductive difficulties—in soil sediments and shellfish samples in areas as remote as the Alaskan coast, but also near highly populated areas, including Southern California and Chicago.

http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-flame-retardants1-2009apr01_0,5394842.story

Stain-resistant chemicals increase brain protein levels in mice

Environmental Health News, Friday, April 3, 2009

Scientists have found that exposure to perfluorinated compounds (PFCs) during early brain development results in increased protein levels in the brain, which can alter the way that synapses form. PFCs are used in products as varied as clothing, carpets, and certain food containers.

<http://www.environmentalhealthnews.org/ehs/newscience/pfcs-affect-proteins-needed-for-brain-growth/view>

Chronic poverty, chronic stress, and adult working memory

Proceedings of the National Academies of Science, Monday, March 30, 2009

New research links chronic stress placed on a child with reduced working memory in adulthood.

<http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2009/03/27/0811910106.abstract?sid=b42fe9f0-cdd0-4d68-a028-dc15a6e7faae>

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

New Ontario law to target toxic chemical use, sources say

The Toronto Globe and Mail, Monday, April 6, 2009

The government of Ontario plans to unveil legislation that would coerce businesses to quantify the amount of various chemicals used in their processing, report their findings to the provincial government, and then develop a strategy to limit their dependence on hazardous chemicals.

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/LAC.20090406.TOXIC06ART21332//TPStory/Environment>

Foul air hits below the belt

The Calcutta Telegraph, Monday, April 6, 2009

The pollution resulting from India's rapid development—particularly the fumes from automobiles—is believed to not only cause sore throats and breathing troubles, but may be responsible for decreased male fertility.

http://www.telegraphindia.com/1090406/jsp/calcutta/story_10778292.jsp

Slowdown's gift to Beijing: cleaner air

The Associated Press, Sunday, April 5, 2009

As the economic downturn reduces the demand for electricity from coal-fueled power plants and reduces the productivity of some factories, the air in China becomes cleaner, reaching the lowest levels of pollution in nearly a decade. Some warn that the pollution slump is only temporary, and that China should use the opportunity to establish lasting clean air policy.

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5i8ssRZzrH3a85eYJcUZCmj7EylZwD97BQIGG2>

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The Michigan Network for Children's Environmental Health is a coalition of health professionals, health-affected groups, environmental organizations, and others dedicated to a safe and less toxic world for Michigan's children. Through education, outreach, and advocacy, we seek to protect Michigan's children from adverse impacts caused by exposure to widespread hazardous chemicals. Please visit: www.mnceh.org.