



# Toxic Times

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

News Highlights from December 1 – December 7, 2008

## MICHIGAN NEWS

### **Toxins still an issue at former Consumer Energy site**

*The Bay City Times*, Thursday, December 4, 2008

Environmental contamination of a former Consumer Energy substation in downtown Bay City remains in contention over a decade after it was first discovered. Though the city and Consumer Energy have entered into a 'tolling' agreement—whereby the statute of limitations is extended for the city—no legal action has been issued.

[http://blog.mlive.com/bctimes/2008/12/toxins\\_still\\_an\\_issue\\_at\\_forme.html](http://blog.mlive.com/bctimes/2008/12/toxins_still_an_issue_at_forme.html)

### **Ecology Center's Healthy toys guide lists 'worst toys'**

*The Flint Journal*, Wednesday, December 3, 2008

The Ecology Center updated the website HealthyToys.org on Wednesday, December 3. Included in the update is the center's list of worst toys as determined by the level of toxic chemicals detected.

[http://www.mlive.com/flintjournal/index.ssf/2008/12/ecology\\_centers\\_healthy\\_toys\\_g.html](http://www.mlive.com/flintjournal/index.ssf/2008/12/ecology_centers_healthy_toys_g.html)

### **More shoppers do research to find toys without toxins**

*The Detroit News*, Wednesday, December 3, 2008

With new information—such as an updated guide from the website HealthyToys.org—available, parents are becoming more careful consumers when buying presents for their children this holiday season.

<http://detnews.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20081203/METRO/812030375/-1/ARCHIVE>

### **Safe alternatives for toys**

*The Saginaw News*, Sunday, December 7, 2008

Congress has passed the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act to reduce levels of certain chemicals from toys, but that law does not take effect until February 2009. The Ecology Center has produced a website that lists the chemical composition of many toys to aid the public in making informed consumer choices.

[http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5imITSXacTPT5LUZYscC\\_7g1bSI8wD94RA1M80](http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5imITSXacTPT5LUZYscC_7g1bSI8wD94RA1M80)

### **Bah & humbug**

*The Detroit Metro Times*, Wednesday, December 3, 2008

The results of the Ecology Center's research of toxic chemicals in toys isn't exactly reassuring for the holiday season—one-third of toys tested in the last year contained 'high' to 'medium' levels of the chemicals of concern. However, the remaining two-thirds show that toy makers can produce products that are chemically safe for children.

<http://metrotimes.com/archives/story.asp?id=13503>

### **The dangers beneath the holiday tree**

*The Livingston Daily*, Sunday, December 7, 2008

Toxic components in children's toys present an unknown threat, since the chemical composition and migration rate of said chemicals are unknown for many products. The Ecology Center's HealthyToys.org aids parents by providing the composition for over 1,500 toys and accepting online requests for future tests.

<http://www.livingstondaily.com/article/20081207/OPINION01/812070338/-1/NEWSFRONT2>

## **NATIONAL NEWS**

### **Toy makers settle lawsuit over lead content**

*The Los Angeles Times*, Friday, December 5, 2008

A lawsuit against Mattel, Inc., and eight other toy manufacturers was settled with the companies agreeing to pay \$1.8 million and accelerate the reduction of toxic lead in their products.

[http://www.latimes.com/business/printedition/la-fi-lead5-2008dec05\\_0\\_2154808.story](http://www.latimes.com/business/printedition/la-fi-lead5-2008dec05_0_2154808.story)

### **Toy toxicity**

*Living on Earth*, Friday, December 5, 2008

Jeff Gearhart of the Ecology Center suggests parents should learn about harmful chemicals in toys and children's products before making purchases. Transcript and audio file.

<http://www.loe.org/shows/segments.htm?programID=08-P13-00049&segmentID=7>

### **Group finds fewer toys with high lead levels**

*The Associated Press*, Wednesday, December 3, 2008

Fewer toys this year contained concerning levels of lead when compared to data from 2007, according to HealthyToys.org. However, the proportion still remains high, with one-third of tested toys containing levels considered worrisome.

[http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5imITSXacTPT5LUZYscC\\_7g1bSI8wD94RA1M80](http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5imITSXacTPT5LUZYscC_7g1bSI8wD94RA1M80)

### **Bisphenol A opponents, Obama team to meet**

*The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, Thursday, December 4, 2008

A group of representatives from various health organizations are scheduled to meet with members of President-elect Obama's transition team to discuss a potential ban of the chemical bisphenol A. With many members of Congress also calling for a ban, regulation proponents are optimistic.

<http://www.jsonline.com/watchdog/watchdogreports/35518279.html>

### **Secondhand smoke causes fertility problems: study**

*Reuters*, Thursday, December 4, 2008

A new study has found that women who inhaled secondhand smoke as children or young adults have more difficulties becoming pregnant and suffer more miscarriages as adults. Toxins in the smoke are believed to be the cause of the complications, according to the study.

<http://www.nationalpost.com/life/health/story.html?id=3dc15bd8-b111-4ba0-a5ea-2fb1cad42c89>

### **EPA perchlorate decision flawed, says advisers**

*Environmental Science and Technology*, Wednesday, December 3, 2008

The Environmental Protection Agency's decision not to regulate perchlorate in drinking water has led to an outpouring of criticism, including from two of the agency's own advisory panels. Perchlorate, a chemical typically found in rocket fuel and formerly found in fertilizer, is thought to cause a range of health problems, including disruption of brain development in fetuses.

<http://pubs.acs.org/doi/full/10.1021/es803191h>

### **Soldiers sue over exposure to toxin**

*The Indianapolis Star*, Thursday, December 4, 2008

KBR of Texas has been accused of publicly downplaying and privately concealing the risk as many as 141 Indiana Guardsmen faced while stationed at the Qarmat Ali water-pumping plant near Basra, Iraq. The soldiers were exposed to a dust containing hexavalent chromium, a known carcinogen, possibly spread in the plant by fleeing loyalists of ousted President Saddam Hussein.

<http://www.indystar.com/article/20081204/LOCAL/812040452>

## **INTERNATIONAL NEWS**

### **It's official: Men really are the weaker sex**

*The London Independent*, Sunday, December 7, 2008

Males in all classes of vertebrates are at risk from common, endocrine-disrupting chemicals, a new study revealed. The comprehensive report covers research from across the globe and finds that males in species ranging from fish to humans are in danger of feminization.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/science/its-official-men-really-are-the-weaker-sex-1055688.html>

### **Bisphenol A may be listed potentially toxic substance in Taiwan**

*Central News Agency*, Friday, December 5, 2008

The Taiwanese Environmental Protection Agency is planning to officially list bisphenol A as a potentially toxic substance. The action comes in light of growing public concern over the chemical's risk to humans, particularly infants.

[http://www.etaiwannews.com/etn/news\\_content.php?id=804502&lang=eng\\_news](http://www.etaiwannews.com/etn/news_content.php?id=804502&lang=eng_news)