



Toxic Times

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

News Highlights from January 21, 2009 – February 3, 2009

MICHIGAN NEWS

Tests will examine soil from site of toxic barrels

The Detroit Free Press, Wednesday, January 21, 2009

Investigators have begun drilling and collecting samples to determine if the soil or groundwater is contaminated near a site where about 500 barrels of toxic waste were discovered.

<http://www.freep.com/article/20090121/NEWS06/90121056/1008/NEWS/Tests+will+examine+soil+from+site+of+toxic+barrels>

Public employees warn Obama about Dow dioxin cleanup deal

The Michigan Messenger, Monday, February 2, 2009

Cleanup negotiations began December 15, 2008, between Dow Chemical and the federal EPA regarding procedure for the removal of dioxin contamination from the company's Midland plant. Concerned public employees are asking the Obama administration to place a freeze on any agreements reached between the two, fearing an outcome favoring Dow.

<http://michiganmessenger.com/12518/public-employees-warn-obama-about-dow-dioxin-cleanup-deal>

Lead poisoning declines

The Detroit News, Saturday, January 31, 2009

Lead poisonings across the state have declined in recent years, down 35 per cent since 2003 despite a 50 per cent increase in the number of children tested.

<http://www.detnews.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20090131/METRO/901310379/1409/METRO>

New system set up for bad air alerts

The Muskegon News, Friday, January 30, 2009

The alert system originally designed to warn about high concentrations of tropospheric ozone has been modified to also alert the population when particulate pollution reaches high concentrations.

http://www.mlive.com/news/muskegon/index.ssf/2009/01/new_system_set_up_for_bad_air.html

Report: Use Michigan 'brownfields' as energy parks

The Associated Press, Tuesday, January 27, 2009

An MSU report suggests that former industrial sites, also known as 'brownfields,' should be used as sites for alternative energy production. The sites are often difficult to resell due to clean-up costs and fear of contamination.

http://www.mlive.com/news/index.ssf/2009/01/report_use_michigan_brownfield.html

NATIONAL NEWS

Children's product sellers get 1-year reprieve on lead testing

The Los Angeles Times, Saturday, January 31, 2009

Producers and retailers of children's products were given a reprieve from the February 10 deadline for lead testing of their goods. The date was set in the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act, a law passed last year that banned goods made for children that had concentrations of lead and phthalates above federally established thresholds.

http://www.latimes.com/business/printedition/la-fi-consumer-lead31-2009jan31_0,309448.story

EPA a failure on chemicals, audit finds

The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, Saturday, January 24, 2009

According to an audit report by the Government Accountability Office, the EPA currently lacks even basic information to determine whether a chemical poses a risk to human health or the environment. The report suggests that broad changes need to be made to streamline the failing agency.

<http://www.jsonline.com/watchdog/38260974.html>

BPA lingers in body, study finds

The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, Wednesday, January 28, 2009

A new study finds that bisphenol A (BPA), a compound commonly found in baby bottles and food container linings, stays in the human body longer than originally assumed. Researchers point out that the longer a chemical stays in the body, the greater chance there is that it may cause toxic effects.

<http://www.jsonline.com/watchdog/watchdogreports/38515489.html>

The dirt on sewage sludge

Science, Thursday, January 22, 2009

Clean water may be released from wastewater plants, but it leaves behind 7 million metric tons annually of sludge containing toxic chemicals, phosphorus, nitrogen, various metals, and pharmaceuticals. More than half of this sludge or so-called "biosolids" is used as fertilizer on farmland.

<http://sciencenow.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/full/2009/122/3>

Plasticizer related to lower hormone levels in men

Environmental Health News, Tuesday, January 27, 2009

Adult men who have an average amount (based on the U.S. population) of the chemicals collectively called phthalates in their urine had lower levels of estrogen and testosterone in their blood. The two hormones are required for healthy sperm production and function.

<http://www.environmentalhealthnews.org/ehs/newscience/phthalates-and-mens-lower-hormone-levels>

Study links children's lead levels, SAT scores

USA Today, Tuesday, February 3, 2009

A new study has found an 'incredibly strong' correlation between the concentration of lead in children's blood and scores on the SAT, suggesting that the higher standardized test scores in recent years could be the result of decreased neurological damage from lead.

http://www.usatoday.com/news/education/2009-02-02-lead-SAT_N.htm

Mercury in corn syrup? Food made with ingredient may have traces of toxic metal

The Chicago Tribune, Tuesday, January 27, 2009

For the first time, researchers have detected trace amounts of the elemental mercury in high fructose corn syrup, an additive that has replaced sugar in many foods.

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/features/lifestyle/health/chi-mercury-corn-syrupjan27,0,2801323.story>

Mystery PCB surfaces in Chicago, baffling researchers

The Chicago Tribune, Thursday, January 22, 2009

More than three decades after PCBs were banned, a new compound in the family has shown up in the Chicago area.

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/chicago/chi-pcb-zonejan22,0,7312688.story>

Study: Are artificial turfs safe?

The Connecticut Post, Saturday, January 24, 2009

Artificial turfs, which have been subject to a 20% increase in installations, are now undergoing an extensive safety review that will analyze everything from the effects on players to risk of groundwater contamination.

http://www.connpost.com/ci_11545992

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

World's highest drug levels entering India stream

The Houston Chronicle, Sunday, January 25, 2009

The effluent from one Indian wastewater plant contained a plethora of pharmaceutical ingredients; among these, the daily amount of one antibiotic released was high enough to treat 90,000 individuals.

<http://www.chron.com/disp/story.mpl/ap/world/6230098.html>

Despite ban on Chinese toys, children still playing with poison

Bombay New, Sunday, January 25, 2009

Experts in India, alarmed by the levels of lead and cadmium in both domestic and imported toys, have called on the government to enforce regulations in the multi-billion dollar industry.

<http://www.bombaynews.net/story/458175>

Asian plantation workers face weed killer health threat

Reuters, Monday, February 2, 2009

Paraquat, a pesticide banned in the European Union and highly regulated in the United States, enjoys common use in China, India, the Philippines, and Malaysia. Human rights groups are outraged at what they see as a double standard for human life.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/rbssIndustryMaterialsUtilitiesNews/idUSSP42744020090202?pageNumber=1&virtualBrandChannel=0>

Birth defects soar due to pollution

China Daily, Saturday, January 31, 2009

Officials at the National Population and Family Planning Commission claim that a baby is born with physical defects every 30 seconds in China. The government views the degrading environment of the nation as the principle cause, particularly the air pollution resulting from coal power plants.

http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2009-01/31/content_7433211.htm

Toxic air raises the risk of death

The Toronto Star, Friday, January 30, 2009

New research has shown that people living in areas of increased air pollution have higher rates of death overall, and higher rates of death from stroke or heart disease, than those living in areas with less air pollution.

<http://www.healthzone.ca/health/article/579542>

Ottawa slaps toxic designation on chemicals used in shampoos, conditioners

The Toronto Globe and Mail, Tuesday, February 3, 2009

Two silicon-based chemicals, D4 and D5, that are typically found in shampoos and conditioners are being listed as dangerous. The chemicals, known to be linked to cancer in high-dose animal testing, were given the label due to the unknown environmental hazards of the chemicals in wastewater effluent.

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/LAC.20090203.CHEMICALS03//TPStory/Environment>

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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. Visit: www.mnceh.org.