



Toxic Times

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

News Highlights from October 12-18, 2008

MICHIGAN NEWS

Homes near old refinery come down

The Muskegon Chronicle, Tuesday, October 14, 2008

The old refinery polluted the area's groundwater with toxic benzene, which can cause cancer. Most homes downstream of Marathon were hooked up to city water years ago, but some still have irrigation systems that pump water from potentially contaminated wells onto lawns and gardens.

<http://www.mlive.com/news/chronicle/index.ssf?/base/news-15/1223995512115330.xml&coll=8>

DEQ: Whitehall Leather site cleanup plan could be ready in first half of 2009

The Muskegon Chronicle, Thursday, October 16, 2008

Michigan Department of Environmental Quality officials said Wednesday that determining the process to deal with the six lagoons on the 33-acre site is the last major hurdle before a formal cleanup plan for the entire site is presented. The lagoons, located in an area west of the former main tannery building that was demolished, were used in wastewater treatment by previous leather-tanning operations on the site. Arsenic and ammonia are the contaminants in the lagoons.

http://blog.mlive.com/chronicle/2008/10/deq_whitehall_leather_site_cle.html

NATIONAL NEWS

Delaware, other states ask baby product companies to avoid BPA

The Daily Times, Monday, October 13, 2008

Attorneys general from Connecticut, New Jersey and Delaware sent letters Friday to 11 companies that make baby bottles and baby formula containers, asking they no longer use the chemical bisphenol-A in their manufacturing because they said it was potentially harmful to infants.

<http://www.delmarvanow.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20081013/NEWS01/8101305>

BPA and the Donor

The New York Times, Monday, October 13, 2008

For an agency that claims to be rooting out conflicts of interest, the Food and Drug Administration has done a poor job of handling what looks like a potential conflict on a committee evaluating the safety of bisphenol-A, known as BPA.

http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/14/opinion/14tue3.html?_r=1&ei=5070&emc=eta1&oref=slogin

Donation raises questions for head of FDA's bisphenol-A panel

The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, Saturday, October 11, 2008

A retired medical supply manufacturer who considers bisphenol-A to be "perfectly safe" gave \$5 million to the research center of Martin Philbert, chairman of the Food and Drug Administration panel about to make a pivotal ruling on the chemical's safety.

<http://www.jsonline.com/story/index.aspx?id=805074>

Some bottled water toxicity shown to exceed law

San Francisco Chronicle, Wednesday, October 15, 2008

Bottled water brands do not always maintain the consistency of quality touted in ads featuring alpine peaks and crystalline lakes and, in some cases, contain toxic byproducts that exceed state safety standards, tests show.

<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2008/10/14/MNGV13H0L4.DTL>

EPA Places Stricter Regulations on Airborne Lead

The Washington Post, Friday, October 17, 2008

The Environmental Protection Agency yesterday tightened the regulatory limit on airborne lead for the first time in 30 years, lowering the legal maximum to a tenth of what it was on the grounds that it poses a more serious threat to young children than officials had realized.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/10/16/AR2008101601618.html>

Environmental illnesses are gaining attention, thanks to the 'green' movement

The Plain Dealer, Tuesday, October 14, 2008

Experts say that everyone is affected in some way by chemical sensitivity. No one quite knows why, but some think genetics may play a large role. Some people are on the severe end, with their sensitivities so extreme that they can't function in many public places where they can't control their environment.

http://blog.cleveland.com/health/2008/10/environmental_illnesses_are_ga.html

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

How much melamine is there in our food?

The Star, Saturday, October 11, 2008

A consumer lobby group has warned that South African food manufacturers could be adding the toxic industrial chemical melamine to their food products to boost protein content. The National Consumer Forum says it expects the results of its independent tests on Chinese and South African-made chocolates, biscuits and cereals, expected early next week, might reveal that local products are also being deliberately contaminated with melamine.

<http://www.thestar.co.za/index.php?fArticleId=4655366>