



Toxic Times

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

News Highlights from September 28- October 4, 2008

MICHIGAN NEWS

New policy continues allowing freighters to wash residues into Great Lakes

The Muskegon Chronicle, Monday, September 29, 2008

Freighters may continue to wash unlimited quantities of coal, limestone and other dry cargo residues into the Great Lakes under a new federal policy. The U.S. Coast Guard Monday finalized an interim policy that allows the long-standing but controversial -- and possibly illegal -- practice of washing dry cargo residues into the lakes to continue indefinitely. The policy enacted Monday replaces a 1998 interim policy.

http://blog.mlive.com/chronicle/2008/09/new_policy_continues_allowing.html

Expert: Even tiny lead levels are bad

The Muskegon Chronicle, Saturday October 4, 2008

Children with any amount of lead in their blood might suffer irreversible health effects, a fact that underscores the need to keep kids from coming in contact with the toxic metal, according to an expert on the subject.

<http://www.mlive.com/news/chronicle/index.ssf?/base/news-15/1223115325121270.xml&coll=8>

NATIONAL NEWS

Chicago's toxic air

The Chicago Tribune, Sunday, September 28, 2008

People living in Chicago and nearby suburbs face some of the highest risks in the nation for cancer, lung disease and other health problems linked to toxic chemicals pouring from industry smokestacks, according to a Tribune analysis of federal data.

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/chi-pollution-risk-29-sep29,0,4323308.story>

California launches broad effort to control hazardous chemicals

The Los Angeles Times, Monday, September 29, 2008

California today launched the most comprehensive program of any state to evaluate, label and, in some cases, ban industrial chemicals that are linked to cancer, hormone disruption and other deadly effects on human health.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/science/environment/la-me-chemicals30-2008sep30,0,3514973.story>

Californians have world's highest levels of flame-retardants

Environmental Health News, Wednesday, October 1, 2008.

Californians have the world's highest levels of toxic flame-retardants in their homes and in their bodies, according to new scientific findings published Wednesday. The main reason for California's high exposure may be the state's flammability standard for furniture, which is the most stringent in the world. To comply, many manufacturers added chemicals called polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs) to polyurethane foam cushions for couches and chairs.

<http://www.environmentalhealthnews.org/ehs/news/californians-have-worlds-highest-levels-of-flame-retardants>

Dioxin in Soil? South Park takes finding in stride

Seattle Post-Intelligencer, Sunday, September 28, 2008

Residents of a long-polluted section of South Park reacted Sunday with a range of emotions from nonchalance to concern about the revelation that a new and more toxic threat -- dioxins -- has turned up in their midst.

http://seattlepi.nwsourc.com/local/380975_dioxin29.html?source=mypi

Carbon auction raises \$38.6M for programs

The Post-Standard, Tuesday, September 30, 2008.

The nation's first auction of carbon dioxide pollution allowances yielded \$38.6 million for the six states that sold them, money that will pay for energy efficiency and renewable energy programs. The auction also began a process that is expected to gradually reduce carbon emissions from power plants in the 10 Northeastern states participating in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative.

<http://www.syracuse.com/business/index.ssf?/base/news-0/12224195896440.xml&coll=1>

Persistent free radicals: discovery and mechanisms for health impacts

American Chemical Society, Environ. Sci. Technol, Wednesday, October 1, 2008.

Free radicals that piggyback on particles formed during combustion processes hang around—and may be the source of carcinogenic characteristics of secondhand smoke and other ultrafine emissions.

<http://pubs.acs.org/cgi-bin/sample.cgi/esthag/asap/html/es802580c.html>

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

European Chemical Clampdown Reaches Across Atlantic

Scientific American, Tuesday, September 30, 2008

Hundreds of chemicals likely to be identified by the European Union (E.U.) as "substances of very high concern" are produced throughout the U.S., sometimes in large quantities. In fact, chemicals such as varieties of plastic-softening phthalates—linked to developmental and reproductive problems because they mimic hormones—are produced in excess of hundreds of million of pounds per year, according to a new report from Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) that is based on U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) data from 2001.

<http://www.sciam.com/article.cfm?id=european-chemical-clampdown-reaches-across-atlantic>

No takers for Bhopal toxic waste

BBC News, Tuesday, September 30, 2008

In the early hours of December 3, 1984, a toxic chemical leaked from a pesticide plant then run by the US Company, Union Carbide, in the city of Bhopal in India's northern state of Madhya Pradesh. There are no takers for the toxic waste left behind at the site of the world's worst industrial accident.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/7569891.stm

COTE D'IVOIRE: Who is to blame for dumping toxic oil sludge?

IRIN News, Wednesday, October 1, 2008

A trial is under way in Abidjan of local officials accused of conniving in the dumping of toxic oil sludge in August 2006 and causing over a dozen deaths, and illnesses to tens of thousands.

<http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=80684>