



Michigan Network for  
**CHILDREN'S**  
**Environmental**  
**HEALTH**

# Toxic Times

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

News Highlights from August 20, 2009 – September 2, 2009

## MICHIGAN NEWS

### **Minorities underrepresented in EPA outreach on Dow dioxin**

*The Michigan Messenger*, Thursday, August 20, 2009

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has pledged an unprecedented degree of transparency in the negotiations and cleanup of dioxins in the Saginaw River watershed. However, many minorities are likely to be unaware of the contamination, despite the fact that they are more likely to eat the most contaminated fish species.

<http://michiganmessenger.com/25117/minorities-underrepresented-in-epa-outreach-on-dow-dioxin>

### **Energy companies want to buy closed Ford plant**

*The New York Times*, Wednesday, August 26, 2009

Xtreme Energy and Clairvoyant Energy of Texas and California, respectively, want to jointly purchase a closed Ford plant in Wixom, MI, and convert it into an alternative energy park. The new complex would build storage batteries, solar panels, and possibly wind turbines.

[http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2009/08/26/business/AP-US-Energy-Park-Michigan.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2009/08/26/business/AP-US-Energy-Park-Michigan.html?_r=1)

### **Rules offered on ships' ballast water**

*The Washington Post*, Sunday, August 30, 2009

The Coast Guard, in an effort to restrict the spread of aquatic invasive species, has proposed a set of rules for the treatment of ballast water.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/08/29/AR2009082902298.html>

## NATIONAL NEWS

### **Images suggest childhood lead exposure linked to faulty brain wiring**

*Environmental Health News*, Wednesday, September 2, 2009

A new study has found that prenatal and childhood exposure to lead can result in changes in the brain structure of an individual. These changes may contribute to the neuropsychological disorders commonly associated with childhood lead exposure.

<http://www.environmentalhealthnews.org/ehs/newscience/childhood-lead-exposure-can-permanently-rewire-brain/>

### **For heart health, avoid tobacco smoke, pollution**

*Reuters*, Monday, August 31, 2009

Two recent studies in the American Heart Association's *Circulation* journal have found that even low levels of cigarette smoke can increase the risk for heart disease and, in a study of over nine million people, there was a direct link between the amount of carbon monoxide in the air and daily admissions to emergency rooms for heart problems.

<http://uk.reuters.com/article/idUKTRE57U5MS20090831>

### **A bad mix: exposure may be “safe” only with one chemical at a time**

*Environmental Health News*, Tuesday, September 1, 2009

Recent research has shown that some chemicals may be more harmful when mixed than when presented alone. This is crucial for toxicity testing, as humans are exposed to hundreds of chemicals at a time.

<http://www.environmentalhealthnews.org/ehs/newscience/bad-mix-exposures-safe-only-one-chemical-at-a-time/>

### **BPA industry fights back**

*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, Saturday, August 22, 2009

With recent pressure placed on manufacturers of bisphenol A (BPA)—a chemical found in some plastics and food container linings—the industry is fighting back. Using many of the people who helped delay tobacco regulation, the BPA industry also plans to use modern media outlets in its battle—Facebook, Twitter, Wikipedia, and blogging.

<http://www.jsonline.com/watchdog/watchdogreports/54195297.html>

### **Critics hit Mattel over lack of 3<sup>rd</sup> party tests**

*Associated Press via The Press Telegram*, Thursday, August 27, 2009

Mattel, the nation's largest toymaker, has quietly been granted permission to perform testing on its own products to ensure compliance with the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act, which, among other things, limits lead and phthalates in children's products. The ruling is allowed by the law, though critics fear corporate interference.

[http://www.presstelegram.com/business/ci\\_13216123](http://www.presstelegram.com/business/ci_13216123)

### **Toward a new U.S. chemicals policy: rebuilding the foundation to advance new science, green chemistry, and environmental health**

*Environmental Health Perspectives*, August 2009

The authors describe the inherent weaknesses of contemporary U.S. chemical policy and offer principles upon which chemical policy reform can be built.

<http://www.ehponline.org/docs/2009/0800404/abstract.html>

### **Nuclear sites fear they're the alternative to Yucca Mountain**

*McClatchy Newspapers*, Sunday, August 30, 2009

President Barack Obama scrapped the Yucca Mountain nuclear waste dump plan, leaving the country without an outlet for its growing volume of nuclear waste. Now the nuclear waste reservation in Hanford, Washington—as well as federal nuclear repositories in South Carolina and Idaho—may become the de facto solution for nuclear waste.

<http://www.mcclatchydc.com/226/story/74567.html>

### **EPA flips over DeadWeight**

*West Branch Times*, Wednesday, September 2, 2009

The U.S. EPA reversed its decision on the environmental impact of lead wheel weights, additions that keep the wheels on cars from vibrating. The changed decision is credited to the Ecology Center and other national environmental groups, but a group of West Branch, Iowa students, calling themselves Team DeadWeight, received some of the credit.

<http://www.westbranchtimes.com/article.php?id=4790>

### **Study finds high patient exposure to radiation**

*The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Thursday, August 27, 2009

New research states that, annually, four million Americans undergo medical imaging that exposes them to radiation above the levels deemed safe for workers in the health care and nuclear industries.

[http://www.philly.com/inquirer/health\\_science/daily/20090827\\_Study\\_finds\\_high\\_patient\\_exposure\\_to\\_radiation.html](http://www.philly.com/inquirer/health_science/daily/20090827_Study_finds_high_patient_exposure_to_radiation.html)

## **INTERNATIONAL NEWS**

### **Cancer in wildlife, normally rare, can signal toxic dangers**

*Environmental Health News*, Thursday, August 27, 2009

Cancer in wildlife is usually rare. Recently, however, cancer rates in wild populations have been rising. While some of the incidences are due to natural causes—viruses, spontaneous tumors, and genetic factors—others are the result of toxic exposure.

<http://www.environmentalhealthnews.org/ehs/news/wildlife-cancer>

### **Lead-laden paint still widely sold around the world**

*Reuters*, Tuesday, August 25, 2009

A new study has found that lead-containing paint—paint with lead concentrations above 600 parts per million—is still widely used around the world, posing a potential threat to children. However, unleaded paints are available at comparable prices in many of the countries studied.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/healthNews/idUSTRE57O64G20090825>

### **BPA found in supposedly safe Swiss water bottles**

*The Calgary Herald*, Tuesday, August 25, 2009

With fears of toxic effects from BPA running high and the Canadian government listing the chemical as a banned toxic substance, consumers have run out to purchase reusable metal water containers. They were disturbed to discover that one Swiss manufacturer of the bottles had been lining them with a BPA-containing epoxy prior to late August.

<http://www.calgaryherald.com/health/found%20supposedly%20safe%20Swiss%20water%20bottles/1928843/story.html>

### **Brain experts check suntan nanos**

*BBC*, Monday, August 24, 2009

Neurological researchers are investigating to see if nanoparticles, such as those found in sunscreen lotions, may have neurodegenerative effects, possibly leading to Alzheimer's and Parkinson's.

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/northern\\_ireland/foyle\\_and\\_west/8218124.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/northern_ireland/foyle_and_west/8218124.stm)

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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](http://www.mnceh.org).*