



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

# Toxic Times

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

News Highlights from January 19, 2010 – February 1, 2010

## MICHIGAN NEWS

### **Michigan House passes ban on toxic fire retardant**

*Michigan Messenger*, Wednesday, January 27, 2010

Legislation has been passed to ban the manufacture, sale, and distribution of products containing DecaBDE in the State of Michigan. DecaBDE is a flame retardant commonly used in electronics, mattresses, and carpets and has been linked to cancer and developmental disabilities in children. The bill would begin to take effect by the end of this year.

<http://michiganmessenger.com/33983/mich-house-passes-ban-on-toxic-fire-retardant>

### **Urge Sen. George to hold hearing on Safe Products Act**

*Letter by Dr. Joe Schwarz, Kalamazoo Gazette*, Tuesday, January 26, 2010

A letter from doctor and former Republican Congressman urging Senator Tom George, chairman of the Health Policy Committee, to call a hearing on the Children's Safe Products Act and to move it to a full vote in the Senate. The bill was recently passed in the House and would require large toy manufacturers and importers to disclose the ingredients in the products they sell in Michigan.

[http://www.mlive.com/opinion/kalamazoo/index.ssf/2010/01/letters\\_urge\\_sen\\_george\\_to\\_hol.html](http://www.mlive.com/opinion/kalamazoo/index.ssf/2010/01/letters_urge_sen_george_to_hol.html)

### **Michigan Pediatricians Interested in Improving Knowledge of Environmental Health Factors**

*Mount Sinai Journal of Medicine*, January/February 2010

A survey of Michigan pediatricians documents their knowledge of environmental issues and the extent to which they are aware of potential environmental influences on their patients' health and related treatment resources. Pediatricians generally feel confident in dealing with lead and second-hand smoke, but feel less confident in managing pesticide, mercury, mold, polychlorinated biphenyl, and air pollution exposures.

<http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/journal/112736813/home>

### **GM bankruptcy leaves gaps in funding for cleanup of toxic sites**

*Michigan Messenger*, Wednesday, January 20, 2010

It is unclear who will pay for cleaning up properties formerly owned by General Motors but subsequently transferred to Motors Liquidation Co. during their bankruptcy process. A \$1.7 billion loan from the US and Canadian governments will cover some of the costs associated with cleaning up 120 properties.

<http://michiganmessenger.com/33607/gm-bankruptcy-leaves-gaps-in-funding-for-cleanup-of-toxic-sites>

## NATIONAL NEWS

### **Children more likely to have attention, behavioral problems when exposed to phthalates in womb, New York study says**

*Environmental Health News*, Friday, January 29, 2010

Scientists at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine report that mothers who had high levels of phthalates when they were pregnant were more likely to have children who scored poorly in areas of attention, aggression, and conflict. Children with mothers among those highest exposed to phthalates were 2.5 times more likely to have attention problems. Phthalates are used in perfumes, shampoos, soaps, and other personal care products.

<http://www.environmentalhealthnews.org/ehs/news/phthalates-and-attention-deficits>

### **Legislation seeks limited ban on BPA**

*Seattle Times*, Thursday, January 28, 2010

The State of Washington is one step closer to enacting a law that would reduce the amount of products containing BPA. A bill recently passed by the state house would fine manufacturers and retailers who make or sell baby bottles, sippy cups, and containers used for baby food that contain the chemical. A vote in the senate is expected soon and prospects for the bill's passage are high.

[http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/localnews/2010922547\\_bisphenola29m.html](http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/localnews/2010922547_bisphenola29m.html)

### **'Princess and Frog' Pendants Recalled for Cadmium**

*ABC News*, Friday, January 29, 2010

Federal regulators announced pendants based on the Disney movie "The Princess and The Frog" were being recalled because of high levels of the toxic metal cadmium. The recall affects two toys exclusively sold at Wal-Mart totaling 55,000 items. The products creator took the action voluntarily.

<http://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory?id=9698836>

### **Younger mothers' breast milk has highest levels of flame-retardants**

*Environmental Health Perspectives*, Monday, January 25, 2010

A recent study of breast milk samples from more than 300 North Carolina women found flame retardant contamination in almost three quarters of the participants. The highest levels were found in women aged 25-29, followed by women younger than 25. Women older than 35 were found to have the lowest levels of PBDEs. The finding is significant because it suggests that younger mothers have higher exposure to flame retardants than older mothers and contaminated breast milk allows direct exposure to infants that are breast-fed.

<http://www.environmentalhealthnews.org/ehs/newscience/younger-womens-breast-milk-higher-levels-of-pbdes/>

### **EPA targets chemical often dumped in Chicago sewers**

*Chicago Tribune*, Sunday, January 31, 2010

Traditionally used to make Scotchgard and Teflon, PFCs or perfluorinated compounds, have recently been discovered by the EPA in sewers in Chicago and Cleveland. They believe the sources of the PFC in sewers are metal plating facilities. The finding is worrisome because the PFCs will be washed unfiltered through sewage treatment plants and end up in lakes and streams. The persistence of these chemicals in the environment has resulted in traces showing up in human blood and wildlife around the world. PFC's are known to cause cancer, liver disease, and other health problems.

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/ct-met-metal-plating-pollution-20100131,0,2383655,full.story>

### **Coalition backs tougher regulation of toxic chemicals**

*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, Thursday, January 21, 2010

A group of labor, health, environmental, and faith-based organizations are calling for tougher regulation of toxic chemicals. A report released seeks to generate support for legislation that will reform the 34-year-old TSCA. The report highlights studies linking toxic chemical exposure to the rise of several chronic diseases.

<http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/10021/1030041-100.stm>

### **State mandates for using environmentally friendly cleaning products debated**

*Quincy Herald-Whig*, Saturday, January 30, 2010

More states are requiring schools and government buildings to use cleaning products that are environmentally friendly. The costs and benefits of the requirement are being raised and debated. Critics say that the government shouldn't mandate what types of products are used, especially if it increases costs.

<http://www.whig.com/story/news/Green-Clean-013110>

## **INTERNATIONAL NEWS**

### **Haiti earthquake: Push to send FEMA trailers to Haiti stirs backlash**

*Los Angeles Times*, Friday, January 29, 2010

The trailers that became the symbol for FEMA's bungled response to Hurricane Katrina will potentially be sent to Haiti. The trailer a industry and legislators are encouraging the government to send these reportedly formaldehyde-laced trailers, in what some believe is an attempt to dump an inferior American product on a poor country. US AID has expressed no interest in sending these trailers to Haiti.

<http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/laplaza/2010/01/haiti-earthquake-.html>

### **Iraq littered with high levels of nuclear and dioxin contamination, study finds**

*The Guardian*, Friday, January 22, 2010

More than 40 sites have across Iraq have been found to be contaminated with high levels of radiation and dioxins, a result of years of war and environmental neglect. Large cities like Najaf, Basra, and Falluja account for 25% of the contaminated sites. These locations appear to coincide with increased rates of cancer and birth defects over the past five years.

[http://www.dnaindia.com/india/comment\\_young-children-are-more-prone-to-lead-poisoning\\_1335393](http://www.dnaindia.com/india/comment_young-children-are-more-prone-to-lead-poisoning_1335393)

**Why your sofa may harm your health**

*The Guardian*, Thursday, January 21, 2010

In the first major study on the health effects of a common household chemical linked it to an increased risk of thyroid disease. The chemical PFOA (perfluorooctanoic acid) is found in everything from sofas to pots and pans. People with high levels in their blood were found to be twice as likely to have thyroid problems as those who had lower levels.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/science/2010/jan/21/sofas-carpets-pans-thyroid-disease>

**NEWSLETTERS FROM MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS**

EcoLink

E-Newsletter of the Ecology Center

January 2010

<http://www.ecocenter.org/newsletter/ecolink/jan10/index.php>

Healthy Children Project Monthly e-news

Learning Disabilities Association of Michigan

February 2010

<http://ldaofmichigan.org/healthychildnews.htm>.

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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).*