



# Toxic Times

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

News Highlights from January 5, 2009 – January 20, 2009

## MICHIGAN NEWS

### **Toxic coal ash piling up in Michigan, elsewhere**

*The Detroit Free Press*, Friday, January 9, 2009

Millions of tons of toxic coal ash are stored in power plant ponds in Michigan and 31 other states. Though the federal government has stated that ash ponds are a dangerous practice, it has not done anything to regulate them.

<http://www.freep.com/article/20090109/NEWS06/90109023/1008/NEWS06/Toxic+coal+ash+piling+up+in+Michigan++elsewhere>

### **Michigan governor facing pressure to stop new coal-fired power plants**

*The Associated Press*, Wednesday, January 7, 2009

Michigan governor Jennifer Granholm is facing pressure from state congressmen, state constituents, and power companies about whether or not she should allow environmental regulators in her administration to issue permits for new coal-burning power plants.

<http://news.moneycentral.msn.com/provider/providerarticle.aspx?feed=AP&date=20090107&id=9495109>

### **Chemical levels decline among those who eat fish from Lake Michigan**

*Environmental Health and News*, Tuesday, January 13, 2009

The levels of certain persistent environmental contaminants—such as DDT and PCBs—have been shown to be declining in the Great Lakes general population and among sport fishers, who typically eat more fish—and thus more contaminants—than the former group.

<http://www.environmentalhealthnews.org/ehs/newscience/toxic-levels-decline-great-lakes-fish-eaters/>

### **2008 Kids Count in Michigan Data Book released**

*Kids Count in Michigan*, January 20, 2009

The Kids Count in Michigan organization has release its 2008 Data Book on Michigan. The book includes information regarding the welfare of children in the state, including health aspects such as lead. More information can be found at:

[www.milhs.org](http://www.milhs.org)

## NATIONAL NEWS

### **Study predicts BPA in babies 11 times higher than adults**

*Environmental Health and News*, Monday, January 12, 2009

Using mathematical models based on the differences in infant and adult bodies, scientists predict that bisphenol A (BPA) concentrations in the former may be 11 times higher than those in the latter. Given that BPA is found in, among other things, plastic baby bottles, the study supports regulation of the chemical.

<http://www.environmentalhealthnews.org/ehs/newscience/BPA-11-times-higher-in-babies/>

### **Nurses who breathe in cleaning chemicals are more likely to get asthma**

*The London Daily Telegraph*, Monday, January 19, 2009

New American research has shown that nurses exposed to cleaning products, disinfectants, and antiseptics in hospitals are 70 percent more likely to develop asthma.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/health/healthnews/4289895/Nurses-who-breathe-in-cleaning-chemicals-are-more-likely-to-get-asthma.html>

### **Flame retarding chemicals pollute fetal tissue**

*Environmental Health and News*, Friday, January 16, 2008

A widely used group of flame retardant chemicals known as PBDEs have been found to cross the placental barrier in mothers and accumulate in the livers of fetuses. Animal testing has found the PBDEs cause thyroid disorders and neurodevelopmental problems in rodents.

<http://www.environmentalhealthnews.org/ehs/newscience/pbdes-pollute-fetal-tissue/>

### **Common chemical increases risk of boys genital deformity**

*Environmental Health and News*, Monday, January 19, 2009

The chemical group phthalates, found in things as varied as hairspray and plastics, can greatly increase the risk of the birth defect hypospadias in boys, according to new research. The study suggests that pregnant women should avoid certain personal care items if they contain phthalates.

<http://www.environmentalhealthnews.org/ehs/newscience/phthalates-increase-hypospadias-risk/>

### **Coal-ash waste poses risk across the nation**

*The Christian Science Monitor*, Friday, January 9, 2009

The Tennessee ash pond that breached its barrier on December 22, 2008, released many toxic chemicals, including lead, chromium, arsenic, and selenium. Investigation has shown that sites around the nation hold similar potential and that safety protocols are not being followed.

<http://features.csmonitor.com/environment/2009/01/09/coal-ash-waste-poses-risk-across-the-nation/>

### **UAB research revives cancer concerns about some plastic additives**

*The Birmingham News*, Sunday, January 11, 2009

Research at the University of Alabama at Birmingham has shown that oral doses of the chemical bisphenol A in laboratory animals can result in tumors and genetic changes consistent with cancer.

<http://www.al.com/news/birminghamnews/metro.ssf?/base/news/1231665325115490.xml&coll=2>

### **Livestock manure stinks for infant health**

*Science News*, Friday, January 16, 2009

An increase in livestock number has a positive relationship on the number of infant deaths, according to a new study. The research's findings lend support for the Clean Air Act to begin regulating noxious gases produced by animals.

[http://www.sciencenews.org/view/generic/id/39990/title/Livestock\\_manure\\_stinks\\_for\\_infant\\_health](http://www.sciencenews.org/view/generic/id/39990/title/Livestock_manure_stinks_for_infant_health)

### **Breathing dirty air may increase risk of diabetes**

*The Columbus Dispatch*, Monday, January 19, 2009

New research suggests that breathing polluted air could increase the risk for diabetes.

[http://www.columbusdispatch.com/live/content/local\\_news/stories/2009/01/18/AIRDIABETES19.html](http://www.columbusdispatch.com/live/content/local_news/stories/2009/01/18/AIRDIABETES19.html)

### **More melamine traces found in U.S. formula**

*The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Thursday, January 8, 2009

Four in 89 cans of domestically produced baby formula have shown trace amounts of melamine or one of its byproducts, cyanuric acid. Melamine is the chemical responsible for the illness of 300,000 children in China—as well as six deaths—though the FDA has stated that the levels in American formula were well below the limits set by the administration.

[http://www.philly.com/inquirer/world\\_us/20090108\\_More\\_melamine\\_traces\\_found\\_in\\_U\\_S\\_formula.html](http://www.philly.com/inquirer/world_us/20090108_More_melamine_traces_found_in_U_S_formula.html)

### **In fake grass, some see real threat**

*The Boston Globe*, Monday, January 19, 2009

With lead being a concern on the mind of many parents, the artificial turf of playgrounds and stadiums is being called into question as a potential source of contamination.

[http://www.boston.com/news/local/massachusetts/articles/2009/01/19/in\\_fake\\_grass\\_some\\_see\\_real\\_threat/](http://www.boston.com/news/local/massachusetts/articles/2009/01/19/in_fake_grass_some_see_real_threat/)

## **INTERNATIONAL NEWS**

### **Activists warn of Israel's use of white phosphorous**

*The Jordan Times*, Tuesday, January 13, 2009

Israel is believed to be using controversial white phosphorous munitions in its campaign in Gaza. The chemical has been shown to cause serious environmental and health complications, including death.

<http://www.jordantimes.com/?news=13428>

**Children of smoking mothers face higher cancer risk**

*The Melbourne Herald Sun*, Monday, January 12, 2009

Children whose mothers smoked while pregnant are at a higher risk for leukemia, brain, kidney, and eye cancers, according to new Australian research.

<http://www.news.com.au/heraldsun/story/0,21985,24901766-661,00.html>

**Tracking household dangers in utero**

*The Toronto National Post*, Saturday, January 10, 2009

Scientists are recruiting pregnant women for a \$6-million study to determine whether household chemicals they are exposed to during their pregnancy trigger health problems in their children—or even alter the child's genetic makeup.

<http://www.nationalpost.com/news/story.html?id=1161453>