



Michigan Network for
CHILDREN'S
Environmental
HEALTH

Toxic Times

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

News Highlights from July 24, 2009 – August 5, 2009

(Please note that we are now issuing "Toxic Times" every other week. We welcome your feedback! Please write to gen@ecocenter.org. Thank-you!)

MICHIGAN NEWS

Both sides put positive spin on Michigan Supreme Court's Dow class-action ruling

The Michigan Messenger, Monday, August 3, 2009

After the Michigan Supreme Court determined new criteria for class-action lawsuits, it deferred the case back to district court. Both sides have claimed this as a victory.

<http://michiganmessenger.com/24145/both-sides-put-positive-spin-on-mich-supreme-court%E2%80%99s-dow-class-action-ruling>

Workshop held to help guide Great Lakes Restoration Initiative dollars to Michigan's most polluted sites

Great Lakes Echo, Wednesday, August 5, 2009

The U.S. Congress is currently working to pass a bill that would grant \$475 million for cleanup of the Great Lakes. Federal agencies and Michigan residents are trying to figure out how to direct that money towards Michigan's 14 most polluted sites.

<http://greatlakesecho.org/2009/08/05/workshop-held-to-help-guide-great-lakes-restoration-initiative-dollars-to-michigans-most-polluted-sites/>

NATIONAL NEWS

Opposing camps agree on rewriting toxin law

USA Today, Tuesday, August 4, 2009

Environmental advocates and chemical industry leaders both agree that current legislation to protect consumers from toxic chemicals—the Toxic Substances Control Act—is ineffective and needs to be replaced with stronger national policy.

http://www.usatoday.com/news/health/2009-08-04-toxins-bpa-epa_N.htm

California will require green chemistry in its products

Miller-McCune Magazine, Monday, July 27, 2009

With chemical concerns drawing increasing attention, 'green chemistry' is becoming more desirable for both industry and policy. However, only California is fully utilizing this demand by passing legislation requiring its implementation.

http://www.miller-mccune.com/science_environment/california-green-chemistry-1364

Congress to FDA: Prove bisphenol A safe, or ban it

The Daily Green, Monday, August 3, 2009

Congress has added a section to the new food safety bill that would require the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to prove the bisphenol A—an additive in certain hard plastics and food container liners—is safe, or to restrict its use in products for pregnant women and young children.

<http://www.thedailygreen.com/environmental-news/latest/bisphenol-a-47080302?src=rss>

Tox21: New dimensions of toxicity testing

Environmental Health Perspectives, August 2009

A paradigm shift towards understanding the biological mechanisms of toxicity, combined with new high-throughput technology, may yield a better understanding of chemical toxicology.

<http://www.ehponline.org/members/2009/117-8/focus.html>

Chemicals can turn genes on and off; new tests needed, scientists say

Environmental Health News, Monday, August 3, 2009

Scientists are concerned that some of the thousands of industrial chemicals and pollutants people are exposed to may be able to enact genetic changes without mutation; they may be able to directly turn genes on and off.

<http://www.environmentalhealthnews.org/ehs/news/epigenetics-workshop>

Dry cleaners leave a toxic legacy

The Chicago Tribune, Sunday, July 26, 2009

Perchloroethylene, a chemical solvent once used in dry cleaning and linked to a host of toxic ailments, has left numerous sites poisoned, more than 500 in Illinois alone.

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/health/chi-dry-cleaners-pollution-bd26-jul26,0,5184515.story>

Perfluoropolymer degrades in decades, study estimates

Environmental Science and Technology, Tuesday, July 21, 2009

Fluorotelomer polymers—used in stain resistant coatings—maybe a significant source of PFOA (a chemical found to cause developmental disorders in lab animals) as they breakdown. While a new study suggests that breakdown can occur over the course of a couple of decades, the compounds are inherently difficult to analyze.

<http://pubs.acs.org/doi/full/10.1021/es9021238?cookieSet=1>

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Anxiety, inattention, poor decisions increase in kids with higher lead levels

Environmental Health News, Tuesday, August 4, 2009

A new study in India has further linked high blood lead levels with cognitive impairments, particularly noticing that as lead levels increase, so do the incidences of anxiety, inattention, and decreased executive function.

<http://www.environmentalhealthnews.org/ehs/newscience/anxiety-inattention-poor-decisions-linked-to-lead-in-kids/>

Declines seen in levels of persistent organic pollutants in mothers' milk

Environmental Health News, Friday, July 24, 2009

Breast milk concentrations of certain persistent organic pollutants—including dioxins, furan, PCBs, and some PBDEs—have decreased over the last decade, according a new study. The findings imply that body concentrations may be decreasing, as well.

<http://www.environmentalhealthnews.org/ehs/newscience/pops-levels-decline-in-mothers-milk/>

Phthalates may increase risk of preterm births

Environmental Health News, Monday, August 3, 2009

Exposure to high concentrations of phthalates during the third trimester may increase the risk of premature birth, according to a new study. Phthalates, chemicals added to plastics to soften them, are widely used in industry. The study is the first on the topic and needs further research to determine any actual causal relationship.

<http://www.environmentalhealthnews.org/ehs/newscience/phthalate-exposure-associated-with-preterm-births/>

Stain repellents affect thyroid hormone levels in adult Inuits

Environmental Health News, Wednesday, August 5, 2009

A recent study has found that certain polyhalogenated compounds, including PCBs and certain stain repellents, can last for a long time in the human body and can affect thyroid function in people.

<http://www.environmentalhealthnews.org/ehs/newscience/pfos-affects-thyroid-hormone-in-inuit/>

Common insect repellent affects nervous system

AFP via Google, Tuesday, August 4, 2009

A commonly used insect repellent known as ‘deet’ has been found to have neurological effects through the same mechanism as some insecticides and sarin nerve gas. While the neurological impact is short-lived, additional research is needed to determine safe levels, especially foe pregnant women and children.

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5jV4LJyAmzdrqcQFwHocR3Y7NxUMg>

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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.