



Toxic Times

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

News Highlights from June 18, 2009 – July 2, 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

Detroit City Council looks to end trash incineration

The Detroit Free Press, Wednesday, July 1, 2009

Lawyers for the Detroit City Council are to request a temporary restraining order and a permanent injunction against any further trash incineration in the city. The council voted 6-2 on Tuesday to seek the orders.

<http://www.freep.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=2009907010330>

Dow dioxin cleanup in mid-Michigan could take years

The Detroit Free Press, Thursday, June 18, 2009

The Dow Chemical Co. cleanup of the Saginaw River watershed could take over a decade, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The chemical company polluted the watershed with dioxin and has been negotiating cleanup for years with the EPA.

<http://www.freep.com/article/20090618/NEWS06/90618065/1008/Dow+dioxin+cleanup+in+mid-Michigan+could+take+years+>

Teams targeting poison in the River Raisin

The Detroit Free Press, Thursday, July 2, 2009

Michigan has more hotspots contaminated with polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) than any other Great Lakes state. Now federal money is being directed towards the cleanup of one of the worst, the 1.2-mile River Raisin.

<http://www.freep.com/article/20090702/NEWS05/907020422/Teams%20targeting%20poison%20in%20the%20River%20Raisin>

NATIONAL NEWS

Oregon governor signs bill outlawing flame retardant, deca-BDE

OPB News, Wednesday, July 1, 2009

Oregon became the fourth state to ban the flame retardant deca-BDE on Tuesday, July 1, 2009. The flame retardant was the last in the family of PBDEs legal in Oregon and will become banned in 2011.

<http://news.opb.org/article/5343-governor-sign-bill-outlawing-flame-retardant/>

Higher bone-lead levels associated with dementia

Environmental Health News, Friday, June 26, 2009

New research on adults age 55-67 found that those with higher bone levels of lead performed poorer on tasks used to detect memory deficits. The lower scores were similar to those seen in adults with Alzheimer's Disease.

<http://www.environmentalhealthnews.org/ehs/newscience/higher-bone-lead-associated-with-dementia/>

Lawsuit claims lead levels in purses too high

The San Francisco Chronicle, Thursday, June 25, 2009

The Center for Environmental Health, an Oakland non-profit, is filing suit against 16 retailers—including Target, Kohl's, and Macy's—claiming that lead levels in purses and wallets are too high and that the retailers do not warn their customers.

<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2009/06/25/BAKU18DF77.DTL>

The FDA's tobacco road

The Los Angeles Times, Monday, June 29, 2009

On June 22, 2009, President Obama signed into law legislation that gives the U.S. Food and Drug Administration power to regulate tobacco and tobacco products. The FDA must now decide how to use this power, taking into consideration its own budget and administrative capabilities.

http://www.latimes.com/features/health/la-he-tobacco29-2009jun29_0,474954.story

FDA to reassess toxin in cans, plastic

The San Francisco Business Times, Friday, June 26, 2009

The U.S. FDA has agreed to review the safety of bisphenol A (BPA), a chemical common in hard plastics and food container linings. Despite a growing amount of scientific literature questioning its safety, the FDA had until recently maintained that BPA was safe.

<http://www.bizjournals.com/sanfrancisco/stories/2009/06/22/daily61.html>

Weed killer kills human cells; study intensifies debate over 'inert' ingredients

Environmental Health News, Monday, June 22, 2009

Roundup is a common herbicide used on farm, parks, and yards around the world. According to a recent study, though, the 'inert' chemicals—inactive ingredients in the mixture—kill human cells, particularly umbilical cord, placental, and embryonic cells.

<http://www.environmentalhealthnews.org/ehs/news/roundup-weed-killer-is-toxic-to-human-cells.-study-intensifies-debate-over-inert-ingredients>

EPA proposes tougher clean air rule

The Washington Post, Monday, June 29, 2009

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is proposing to modify the allowable concentration of nitrogen dioxide in the air. The change would address short-term exposure as well as the currently monitored long-term exposure.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/06/29/AR2009062903534.html>

More preemies born in neighborhoods with heavy pollution from cars, trucks

Environmental Health News, Thursday, June 25, 2009

A recent study has linked living in areas with heavy traffic—particularly truck traffic—to premature labor and preeclampsia, a high blood pressure condition that can risk the health of the baby and the mother.

<http://www.environmentalhealthnews.org/ehs/news/preemies-and-air-pollution>

Next-generation risk assessment

Chemical and Engineering News, Monday, June 22, 2009

Chemical risk assessment is undergoing a paradigm shift, moving away from the costly and time intensive whole animal studies and towards genomics. The new method will rely more on observing what happens when human cell lines, proteins, and small molecules interact with tested chemicals.

<http://pubs.acs.org/cen/government/87/8725gov1.html>

A new take on clean water

Living on Earth, Friday, June 26, 2009

In a 6-3 decision, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a ruling redefining 'fill,' the solid material that can be placed at the bottom of a body of water. Under this new ruling, certain forms of pollution are considered fill, so long as they have enough solid material.

<http://www.loe.org/shows/segments.htm?programID=09-P13-00026&segmentID=1>

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

The environmental toll of plastics

Environmental Health News, Thursday, July 2, 2009

Plastics have helped mold current society with their versatility and ease of production. However, they leave a negative impact on the environment and human health, according to a new compilation of articles authored by more than 60 scientists from around the world.

<http://www.environmentalhealthnews.org/ehs/news/dangers-of-plastic>

Chemicals in shower curtains and children's toys linked to underweight babies

The London Daily Mail, Thursday, June 25, 2009

Phthalates, a widely-used group of chemicals incorporated in plastics to make them softer, has been linked to decreased birthweight in newborns.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-1195370/Chemicals-shower-curtains-childrens-toys-linked-underweight-babies.html>

More evidence links pesticides to Parkinson's

Reuters Health, Friday, June 19, 2009

Researchers have found that agricultural workers exposed to pesticides are at greater risk for Parkinson's disease than the general public. Furthermore, the study claims that the longer the exposure time, the greater the risk, thus strengthening the causal relationship.

<http://www.reutershealth.com/archive/2009/06/19/eline/links/20090619elin001.html>

US lawmakers ask Dow to clean up Bhopal

The Bombay Indian Express, Thursday, June 18, 2009

Several U.S. legislators have asked that Dow Chemical Co., the successor to Union Carbide, immediately take steps to economically and medically rehabilitate the people of Bhopal, India, the site of one of the worst industrial accidents.

<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/us-lawmakers-ask-dow-to-clean-up-bhopal/478293/0>

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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.