



# Toxic Times

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

News Highlights from March 25, 2009 – March 31, 2009

## MICHIGAN NEWS

### **EPA halts dioxin talks with Dow Chemical—again**

*The Saginaw News*, Wednesday, March 25, 2009

The Environmental Protection Agency has suspended its negotiations with Dow Chemical Co. for a second time this year. The federal organization is using the delay to interview stakeholders about future cleanup plans.

[http://blog.mlive.com/watershedwatch/2009/03/epa\\_halts\\_dioxin\\_talks\\_with\\_do.html](http://blog.mlive.com/watershedwatch/2009/03/epa_halts_dioxin_talks_with_do.html)

### **K'zoo River cleanup slowed by chemical company's bankruptcy protection**

*The Michigan Messenger*, Monday, March 30, 2009

The Kalamazoo River, contaminated with polychlorinated biphenyls and listed as a Superfund site since 1990, has seen incredible remediation actions over the past two years. However, all of that momentum seems to be slipping away as LyondellBasell Industries—one of the companies paying for the cleanup—withdraws its contribution due to its bankruptcy.

<http://michiganmessenger.com/15564/kzoo-river-cleanup-slowed-by-chemical-companys-bankruptcy-protection>

## NATIONAL NEWS

### **Food may contain environmental estrogens**

*Environmental Health News*, Friday, March 27, 2009

Two commonly used food additives have been found to have potential hormone disrupting capabilities. The findings, a result of research looking for molecular structures that could interact with estrogen receptors, call into question how much is known about the more than 3,000 commercial food additives.

<http://www.environmentalhealthnews.org/ehs/news/estrogenic-food-additives>

### **EPA to monitor 62 schools' air**

*USA Today*, Tuesday, March 31, 2009

The Environmental Protection Agency plans to monitor the air outside of schools in 22 states to determine the concentration of potentially harmful chemicals.

[http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/environment/2009-03-30-toxic-schools\\_N.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/environment/2009-03-30-toxic-schools_N.htm)

**Is a food revolution now in season?**

*The New York Times*, Saturday, March 21, 2009

Activists for locally-grown and organic foods claim that the products of industrialized agriculture are damaging to the environment and unhealthy, and they place part of the blame for the current agricultural paradigm on the government, who pays large subsidies to the industry. However, even with a president who is sympathetic to the cause, it may be a while before the movement is fully realized.

[http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/22/business/22food.html?\\_r=2](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/22/business/22food.html?_r=2)

**Almost one-quarter of wells contaminated, report finds**

*Atlantic City Press*, Friday, March 27, 2009

According to a new report by the U.S. Geological Survey, one in five private wells contain at least one contaminant that may be hazardous to human health. Federal regulation for private wells does not exist.

<http://www.pressofatlanticcity.com/186/story/441495.html>

**INTERNATIONAL NEWS**

**Canada proposes limits on flame retardant, deca-BDE**

*Toronto Globe and Mail*, Saturday, March 28, 2009

The Canadian government plans to prohibit the flame retardant deca-BDE, a measure already taken by the European Union. The United States has no legislation regarding deca.

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/LAC.20090328.PBDE28ART2115//TPStory/Environment>

**U.S. asks U.N. to help cut ship emissions near coasts**

*Reuters*, Monday, March 30, 2009

The United States has asked the United Nations International Maritime Organization to create a 230-mile buffer zone around the country's coast in which vessels would face stricter emissions laws. The request was made to help improve human health in coastal cities where smog and particulates from ships are a continuous concern.

<http://uk.reuters.com/article/oilRpt/idUKN3034927220090330>

**Scientists find 'baffling' link between autism and vinyl flooring**

*Environmental Health News*, Tuesday, March 31, 2009

Researchers in a joint Sweden-U.S. study have found a tentative link between autism spectrum disorders and vinyl flooring, which can release phthalates into the environment. The finding, the first showing such a link between an environmental chemical and autism, is 'far from conclusive' and requires further research, according to the scientists.

<http://www.environmentalhealthnews.org/ehs/news/autism-and-vinyl-flooring>

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