



Toxic Times

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

News Highlights from May 14, 2009 – May 20, 2009

MICHIGAN NEWS

Children's Safe Products Act passes State House

Summarized from MIRS, Wednesday, May 13, 2009

Seven bills (HB 4763-4769) that compose a package to give consumers the right to know if toxic chemicals are present in toys and children's products passed the Michigan House of Representatives on Wednesday, May 13, 2009. The bills would have the Michigan Department of Community Health establish a list of chemicals of concern and a list of chemicals of highest concern and post information received from manufacturers to inform consumers about what products contain what chemicals on the lists and in what amounts.

This summary is from coverage of the Children's Safe Products Act provided by MIRS, a subscription-only publication. For more information, please see the Michigan Network for Children's Environmental Health [press release](#).

Michigan smoking ban bill advances in House committee; no deal reached

The Associated Press via MLive.com, Wednesday, May 20, 2009

A Michigan House Committee passed a bill that would ban smoking at most workplaces, except casinos and tobacco shops. The full House and the State Senate would need to pass an identical bill for the ban to become law; last year the Senate passed a complete workplace ban on smoking, and no compromise has yet been made between the two chambers.

http://www.mlive.com/politics/index.ssf/2009/05/michigan_smoking_ban_bill_adv.html

Fighting off shareholder environmental resolution, Dow cites inaccurate information in its SEC filing

The Michigan Messenger, Tuesday, May 19, 2009

Dow Chemical Co., facing a shareholder resolution to investigate its contamination of the Saginaw River watershed, has advised against passing the resolution. It cites a proxy statement it made from March with the SEC that claims there is no advised restriction of walleye consumption from the area, a claim inaccurate since May 2008.

<http://michiganmessenger.com/19322/fighting-off-shareholders-environmental-resolution-dow-cites-inaccurate-information-in-its-sec-filing>

NATIONAL NEWS

Prenatal exposure to flame retardant is associated with increased risk of male genital anomalies

Environmental Health Science, Friday, May 15, 2009

Researchers have found that men and boys exposed in the womb to polybrominated biphenyl (PBB) flame retardants were at a heightened risk of genital conditions. While PBBs are no longer used, their similarity to current flame retardants, their long half-lives, and their ability to cross the placenta are causes for concern.

<http://www.environmentalhealthnews.org/ehs/newscience/prenatal-pbbs-higher-risk-of-male-genital-problems/>

School-age lead exposure most harmful to IQ

Science News, Thursday, May 14, 2009

New research has shown a stronger correlation with lead's ability to lower IQ in early school-age children as opposed to the infants and toddlers typically tested for the metal. The research found that the older age group can face significant lead exposure and that, when elevated, these exposures correlate to arrests later in life for violent action.

http://www.sciencenews.org/view/generic/id/43795/title/School-age_lead_exposures_most_harmful_to_IQ

FDA relied heavily on BPA lobby

The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, Saturday, May 16, 2009

The US Food and Drug Administration used information obtained from chemical industry lobbyists to make decisions about bisphenol A (BPA). Lobbyist analyses were used for discrediting conflicting findings, tracking state and local efforts to ban the chemical, and monitoring press coverage.

<http://www.jsonline.com/watchdog/watchdogreports/45228647.html>

Are your household products safe?

Brown and Toland HealthLink, Spring 2009

Everyday products may contain toxic chemicals and often there is no warning label. This article contains tips on being a savvy consumer.

<http://www.bthealthlink.com/3.html>

Prenatal cigarette smoke exposure linked to heart disease

Environmental Health News, Monday, Tuesday 18, 2009

New research has shown that mice exposed *in utero* to cigarette smoke have changes in body weight and lipid levels later in life that increase the chance of cardiovascular disease.

<http://www.environmentalhealthnews.org/ehs/newscience/prenatal-cigarette-smoke-linked-to-heart-disease-in-mice/>

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Chemical industry to work for more safety

Reuters, Friday, May 15, 2009

Chemical industries and governments have agreed to step up efforts to improve safety in chemicals. The focus points of the group include lead in paint, chemicals in everyday use, and nanotechnology.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/GCA-GreenBusiness/idUSTRE54E5C820090515>

Canadian researchers shine new light on old Great Lakes contaminant

Great Lakes Echo, Tuesday, May 19, 2009

Canadian researchers have found that lake trout in Lake Ontario can have concentrations of polychlorinated naphthalenes (PCNs)—a group of dioxin-like chemicals—high enough to merit fish consumption advisories. However, neither the US nor Canada monitors PCN levels.

<http://greatlakesecho.org/2009/05/19/old-contaminant-prompts-new-great-lakes-health-concerns/>

Pollution can change your DNA in 3 days, study suggests

National Geographic News, Sunday, May 17, 2009

Italian research has observed particulate pollution—small particles of matter suspended in the air—altering DNA within three days among steel-foundry workers. While the particulate concentrations were elevated in the foundry compared to background air, similar effects may occur in city dwellers over a prolonged period.

<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2009/05/090517-pollution-changes-dna.html>

Tree leaves reveal deadly pollution levels

Discovery News, Monday, May 18, 2009

Researchers in the UK are using tree leaves from urban plants as passive monitors to observe background particulate pollution, responsible for thousands of premature deaths each year in the US and UK.

<http://dsc.discovery.com/news/2009/05/18/tree-leaves-pollution.html>

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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.