



ALASKA PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION

Committed To Advancing Alaska's Public Health Since 1978

ALPHA RESOLUTION Late Breaker 01- 2008

Reform of Chemicals Policy to Protect Public Health

Sponsor: Alaska Community Action on Toxics (ACAT)
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WHEREAS, the American Public Health Association has established policy in the area of chemical safety for workers and the general public,^{1,2,3,4,5,6,7} and the need for reform of the U.S. industrial chemical regulations;⁸ and

WHEREAS, the U.S. chemical industry is a critical economic sector that designs, produces, and imports 42 billion pounds of chemical substances per day—substances that constitute the material base of society, with global production growing a projected four-fold by 2050;⁹ and

WHEREAS, many of these chemicals ultimately found in toys, everyday consumer and industrial products are also known to be hazardous to human biology and ecological systems;^{10,11} and

WHEREAS, hundreds of these same chemicals are now found, in studies by the CDC and others, to be accumulating in human tissues, including breast milk and the cord blood of infants;^{12,13} and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Public Health Association has passed a resolution in support of communities having the right to be fully informed about hazardous substances and physical agents in their communities;¹⁴ and

WHEREAS, The Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) of 1976—the federal statute broadly intended to enable regulation of chemicals both before and after they enter commerce—has fallen short of its objectives, according to multiple independent analyses by the National Academy of Sciences,¹⁵ the Government Accountability Office,^{16,17} the U.S. Congress,¹⁸ the U.S. EPA,¹⁹ the University of California,²⁰ and others;²¹ and

WHEREAS, TSCA consequently fails to serve as an effective vehicle for the public, industry, or government to *assess* the hazards of chemicals in commerce or control those of greatest health concern, and TSCA therefore also fails to motivate U.S. industry to innovate or invest in cleaner technologies, such as “Green Chemistry”—a term and approach well-defined in the scientific literature and endorsed by the American Chemistry Society;²² and

WHEREAS, The Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA)—the federal law that provides for federal regulation of pesticide distribution, sale, and use—provides inadequate screening for pesticides known or suspected to impair human health and there are currently over 7,000 pesticides registered for use in Alaska;²³ and

WHEREAS, market conditions have produced a set of chemical exposure problems for children,²⁴ for workers, the public, ecosystems, government, businesses, and industry²⁵ that will deepen, concomitant with expanding global chemical production; and

WHEREAS, sweeping changes in public European environmental health policy²⁶ are driving global interest among manufacturers in cleaner technologies, including Green Chemistry, that reduce chemical risks; and

WHEREAS, increasing capacity in Green Chemistry will serve to prevent injury and disease—a cornerstone of public health policy and practice—since the twelve basic principles of Green Chemistry²⁷ include: reduced toxicity of final and intermediate products to human health and the environment; avoidance of substances that persist in the environment; and utilization of safer manufacturing processes to protect workers and prevent accidents.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Public Health Association:

- Supports and urges the Alaska Legislature to take action to protect the health of Alaska citizens from unnecessary exposures to toxic chemicals by requiring the phase out of toxic, persistent, bioaccumulative chemicals in products and production processes; and
- Advocates and advises the Alaska Legislature to establish a chemicals policy that is comprehensive and an integrated hazard-based approach; and
- Supports and urges Alaska to become a leader among states in innovation and education in the area of cleaner technology, such as Green Chemistry.

Fiscal and Public Health Impact Statement

This action will result in minor costs to ALPHA associated with sending this resolution and accompanying cover letter to the Governor and key political leaders. This action will benefit public health by helping to eliminate the negative health effects associated with toxic chemicals.

¹ APHA Policy 20077 Calling on the U.S. Congress to Restructure the Toxic Substances Control Act of 1976.

² APHA Policy 200011 The precautionary principle and children's health.

³ APHA Policy 20008 Affirming the importance of regulating pesticide exposures to protect public health.

⁴ APHA Policy 20009 Support for International Action to eliminate persistent organic pollutants.

⁵ APHA Policy 2002-5 Preserving Right-to-know information and encouraging hazard reduction to reduce the risk of exposure to toxic substances.

⁶ APHA Policy 2005-5 Protecting human milk from persistent toxic chemical contaminants.

⁷ APHA Policy 9606 The Precautionary Principle and Chemical Exposure Standards for the Workplace.

⁸ APHA Policy 20077 Calling on the U.S. Congress to Restructure the Toxic Substances Control Act of 1976.

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- ⁹ Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Environmental Outlook for the Chemicals Industry (<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/7/45/2375538.pdf>) (accessed September 28, 2008). p. 34-36, 2001.
- ¹⁰ National Institutes of Health, National Library of Medicine, Specialized Information Services. Household Products Database (<http://householdproducts.nlm.nih.gov/about.html>).
- ¹¹ For example lead, cadmium, halogenated compounds, perfluorocarbons, phthalates, bisphenol A, solvents and pesticides are chemicals found in common consumer products that have been linked to adverse health effects.
- ¹² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2005. The Third National Report on Human Exposure to Environmental Chemicals. (<http://www.cdc.gov/exposurereport/>) (accessed September 28, 2008).
- ¹³ Houlihan J et al. 2005. Body Burden: The Pollution in Newborns. (www.ewg.org) (accessed September 01, 2008). Environmental Working Group: Washington, DC.
- ¹⁴ ALPHA Resolution #4-1985 Advocating Community Right-To-Know Legislation.
- ¹⁵ National Academy of Sciences Commission on Life Sciences. Toxicology Testing: Strategies to Determine Needs and Priorities. Washington, D.C.: National Academy of Sciences Press, 1984.
- ¹⁶ United States General Accounting Office. Toxic Substances Control Act: Legislative Changes Could Make the Act More Effective (GAO/RCED-94-103). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1994.
- ¹⁷ United States Government Accountability Office. Chemical Regulation: Options Exist to Improve EPA's Ability to Assess Health Risks and Manage its Chemicals Review Program. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2005.
- ¹⁸ Congress of the United States Office of Technology Assessment. Screening and Testing of Chemicals in Commerce: Background Paper. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1995.
- ¹⁹ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Chemical Hazard Data Availability Study (<http://www.epa.gov/HPV/pubs/general/hazchem.pdf>) (accessed September 29, 2008). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1998.
- ²⁰ Wilson M, Schwarzman M. 2008. Green Chemistry: Cornerstone to a Sustainable California. (http://coeh.berkeley.edu/docs/news/green_chem_brief.pdf) (accessed September 30, 2008) The Centers for Occupational and Environmental Health University of California
- ²¹ Roe D, Pease W, Florini K, Silbergeld E. Toxic Ignorance: The Continuing Absence of Basic Health Testing for Top-Selling Chemicals in the United States (<http://www.environmentaldefense.org/pdf.cfm?ContentID=243&FileName=toxicignorance.pdf>) (accessed September 29, 2008). Washington, D.C.: Environmental Defense, 1997.
- ²² American Chemistry Society, <http://pubs.acs.org/promo/greenchemistry/index.html> (accessed September 30, 2008).
- ²³ Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, Division of Environmental Health, Pesticide Control Program, Database of Pesticides. Site owned, maintained, and provided by Kelly Registration Systems, Inc. (KRS), Covington, GA <http://www.kellysolutions.com/ak/showallproducts.asp> (accessed September 29, 2008).
- ²⁴ Woodruff T, Axelrad D, Kyle AD, Nweke O et al. 2004. Trends in environmentally related childhood illnesses. Pediatrics 113(4): 1133-1140.
- ²⁵ Wilson et al, 2006.
- ²⁶ REACH (Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemical substances.) was implemented in Europe in June 2007. http://ec.europa.eu/environment/chemicals/reach/reach_intro.htm.
- ²⁷ American Chemistry Society Green Chemistry Institute. The Twelve Principles of Green Chemistry. http://portal.acs.org/portal/acs/corg/content?_nfpb=true&_pageLabel=PP_ARTICLEMAIN&node_id=1415&content_id=WPCP_007504&use_sec=true&sec_url_var=region1. (accessed September 29, 2008)