



Toxic Free Maryland: 2019 Chemicals of Concern

We are constantly exposed to toxic chemicals in our food, drinking water, and consumer products. Yet very few chemicals have been tested for safety by the government before they are put into toys our children play with, health and beauty products we apply to our skin, and furniture we bring into our homes. We are constantly exposed to chemicals that haven't been proven safe—and these exposures add up over time.

Toxic chemical exposure is linked to a host of health effects including: cancer, learning disabilities, autism and developmental disorders, fertility problems, asthma and other respiratory problems, endocrine disruption, and lowered IQ. We need to protect the most vulnerable populations from toxic chemical exposure - fetuses, newborns, children, pregnant and nursing mothers, men who father children, and workers.

Flame Retardant Chemicals

Related bills:

Sen. Hayes (SB902) Del. Cullison (HB1264)

Health impacts: cancer, lower IQ and attention deficits in children, hormone disruption, and thyroid damage.

Years ago, the chemical industry lobbied manufacturers to add flame retardants to many products in our homes including toys, upholstered furniture and mattresses, but research has proven that they are ineffective for fire safety - and are in fact making fires more dangerous because of the carcinogenic fumes that are released when they burn. The loudest voices to ban flame retardants are firefighters. More than half of all career firefighter line-of-duty deaths are from job-related cancers.

California already banned flame retardants in mattresses, toys and furniture, and additional states are considering similar legislation. And, after extensive review, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) recommended manufacturers against adding chemical flame retardants to their products.

Chlorpyrifos

Related bills:

Sen. Nathan-Pulliam (SB270) Del. Stein (HB275)

Health impacts" attention disorders, autism, lower birth weight, reduced IQ, loss of working memory, and delayed motor development.

Chlorpyrifos is a toxic, nerve agent pesticide proven to cause brain damage in children and impact the health of farmworkers, as well as our waterways and wildlife. After years of study, the U.S. EPA concluded that chlorpyrifos cannot be considered safe at any detectable level of exposure and was set to ban it. The Trump Administration reversed that decision.

The 9th circuit federal court of appeals ruled in August that the EPA must "revoke all tolerances and cancel all registrations for chlorpyrifos" EPA has appealed that decision and will likely continue to tie this issue up in the courts for months, or years, to come. Maryland should not wait for the EPA and should ban chlorpyrifos to protect Marylanders and our environment. There are many alternative products on the market that can treat the same crop pests that chlorpyrifos targets.

Lead

Related bills:

Sen. McCray (SB481) and Del. Solomon (HB1253)

Del. R. Lewis (HB1233)

Health impacts: Lead is a potent neurotoxin that affects how our children learn, grow, and behave. There is no safe level of lead exposure.

Children can be exposed to lead in old paint (which degrades into easily ingested dust), pipes and fixtures that leach lead into water, as well as through various consumer products.

Maryland has made great strides at reducing lead poisoning, but there is more that we can do to ensure that our children are safe from exposure to lead at home, in school, and in our communities. It is time to fully remediate for lead in homes, schools, and public infrastructure.

DCM and NMP in Paintstrippers

Related bills: Sen. Lam (SB82) and Del. Hill (HB299)

Health impacts: lung and liver cancer, neurotoxicity, and reproductive toxicity and immediate death.

The chemicals methylene chloride (DCM) and N-methyl pyrrolidone (NMP), used in paint and coating removal, are not only linked to negative health impacts, they can cause immediate death, including three known deaths in Maryland. Safer alternatives are available.

In Jan 2017, the EPA proposed bans on the use of these chemicals. Unfortunately, the Trump Administration quickly shelved the proposed ban. So these products are still on store shelves and people are dying – both from “DIY” use and professional use. Many major retailers have voluntarily committed to stop selling products that contain these chemicals, including: Amazon, Lowe’s, Sherwin-Williams, Home Depot, and Walmart.

PFAS

Health associations: testicular, kidney, and bladder cancer, fertility problems, thyroid effects, and decreased immune response to vaccines in children.

PFAS, or highly fluorinated chemicals, are used in a wide range of consumer and industrial products. Because PFAS are highly persistent and soluble in water, they can contaminate drinking water in communities near or downstream from where the chemicals are used.

One important way to reduce the risk of water contamination and exposure to PFAS is to use a safer alternative in firefighting foam. The federal government recently passed legislation enabling civilian airports to use PFAS-free firefighting agents, and Washington State has already passed legislation to phase out the use of firefighting foam containing PFAS.

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