



Coalition Applauds EPA's Actions to Limit Toxic Flame Retardant Deca-BDE

HB 4699 Still Needed, As Voluntary Agreement Does Not Cover Imported Toxic Products

December 22, 2009: On the day that the Michigan House Great Lakes & Environment Committee held a second (?) hearing on a bill (HB 4699) addressing the toxic flame retardant deca-BDE, the U.S. EPA announced that three major industrial producers of deca-BDE agreed to end the manufacture, importation, and sale of the chemical in the United States. The import and sale of consumer products containing deca-BDE was not a part of the voluntary agreement. Michigan HB 4699 would stop in-state sales of TVs, computers, mattresses, and residential furniture containing the toxic flame retardant.

"It's gratifying to see the EPA take strong action on this unnecessary, dangerous chemical," stated State Representative Deb Kennedy, sponsor of HB 4699. "While this voluntary agreement is a major step forward, we still need to assure that no deca-laden products could be imported, leading to releases into our homes and ultimately the Great Lakes."

The EPA agreement phases out deca's domestic manufacturing, import, and sale for electrical and electronic equipment by the end of 2010, all non-military and transportation uses by the end of 2012, and all uses entirely by the end of 2013. The agreement is voluntary, applies to three major deca manufacturers, and does not apply to products imported with deca in them.

"The EPA's action makes an irrefutable case for protecting Michigan's children and the Great Lakes from this persistent, bioaccumulative, toxic chemical," stated Mike Shriberg, Ph.D., Policy Director for the Ecology Center and Michigan Network for Children's Environmental Health. "The leadership of State Representative Deb Kennedy and others will now assure nearly total elimination of this hazardous chemical in the state."

In 2004, Michigan was one of the first states to ban penta- and octa-BDE, the two other commercial chemicals in the PBDE family (polybrominated diphenyl ethers). Subsequent research revealed that deca-BDE can break down into these and other more toxic substances.

The EPA action and passage of HB 4699 to phase out products containing deca are strongly supported by the Michigan Network for Children's Environmental Health, a



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diverse coalition of health, medical, health-affected and environmental organizations including the Michigan Nurses Association, the Learning Disabilities Association and the Michigan Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. The Michigan Association of Fire Chiefs also supports HB 4699.

Network Members: American Academy of Pediatrics (Michigan Chapter) • Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS) • Association for Children's Mental Health • Autism Society of Michigan • Citizens for Alternatives to Chemical Contamination • Clean Water Fund • Clinton County Family Resource Center • Detroiters Working for Environmental Justice • East Michigan Environmental Action Council • Ecology Center • Healthy Homes Coalition of West Michigan • Learning Disabilities Association (LDA) of Michigan • Local Motion • Michigan Chapter of the National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners • Michigan Coalition for Children and Families • Michigan Environmental Council • Michigan League of Conservation Voters Education Fund • Michigan Nurses Association • Science and Environmental Health Network • Voices for Earth Justice