

Center for Health, Environment and Justice
 Advocates for Environmental Human Rights
 Allergy and Environmental Illness Group
 American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
 Basel Action Network (BAN) * Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League
 Breast Cancer Action * Breast Cancer Fund * Buckeye Environmental Network
 Calhoun County Resource Watch * California Teamsters Public Affairs Council
 Caney Fork Headwaters Association * Center for Corporate Policy
 Center for Environmental Health * Center for International Environmental Law
 Center for Media and Democracy * Center for Public Environmental Oversight
 Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment * Chemical Weapons Working Group
 Chlorine Free Products Association * Citizens Against Ruining the Environment
 Citizens' Environmental Coalition * Citizens for Safe Water Around Badger
 Citizens Leading for Environmental Action and Responsibility * Clean New York
 Clean Water Action * Commonweal * Communities Against Toxics
 Communities for a Better Environment
 Community In-power and Development Association Inc
 Concerned Citizens of Lake Twp. * Concerned Citizens of Russell
 Concerned Citizens of the Plainview-Old Bethpage Community Inc.
 Connecticut Coalition for Environmental Justice
 Cumberland Countians for Peace & Justice * Downwinders At Risk
 Ecological Health Organization * Eco-Cycle Inc * Ecology Action Centre
 Ecology Center * Electronics TakeBack Coalition
 Empire State Consumer Project * Environmental Health Fund
 Environmental Health Strategy Center * Environmental Research Foundation
 Farmworker Association of Florida * Farmworker Health and Safety Institute
 Finger Lakes Zero Waste Coalition * Friends of the Earth US
 GAIA: Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives/ Global Anti-Incinerator Alliance
 Global Community Monitor * Glynn Environmental Coalition
 Great Neck Breast Cancer Coalition * Green Change
 Greenaction for Health and Environmental Justice * Green Delaware
 Green Press Initiative * Greenpeace * Habitat Map
 Hands Across The River Coalition * Health Care Without Harm-Boston
 Healthy Building Network * Healthy Child Healthy World
 Hopewell Junction Citizens for Clean Water * Indiana Forest Alliance
 Indiana Toxics Action * Indigenous Environmental Network
 Institute for a Sustainable Future * Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
 Institute for Children's Environmental Health * Institute for Local Self-Reliance
 Institute for Social Ecology * International POPs Elimination Network
 Ithaca South Hill Industrial Pollution * Just Transition Alliance
 Kentucky Environmental Foundation * Kids for Saving Earth
 Learning Disabilities Association of America * Lone Tree Council * MassCOSH
 Mossville Environmental Action Now
 National Association for the Dually Diagnosed
 Natural Resources Council of Maine * Neighbors Against the Burner

**Network for Environmental & Economic Responsibility of the -
United Church of Christ
New York Committee for Occupational Safety and Health
North Carolina Occupational Health and Safety Project(NCOSH)
Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance * Nuclear Information and Resource Service
NYPIRG * NY Vapor Intrusion Alliance * Old Bedford Village Development, Inc.
Organic Consumers Association * People For Puget Sound
The Peoples Advocate * Pesticide Free Zone
Physicians for Social Responsibility * Pioneer Valley Preservation Coalition
Protect All Children's Environment
The Public Health and Environmental Health Committee of the Puerto Rico -
College of Physicians and Surgeons * Science and Environmental Health Network
Stop the Spray Marin * The Story of Stuff Project
TEDX (The Endocrine Disruption Exchange)
Texas Campaign for the Environment * Tittabawassee River Watch
ToxicTargets.org * U.S. PIRG * USMWF.ORG, Inc * Washington Toxics Coalition
WE ACT for Environmental Justice, Inc. (WE ACT) * West County Toxics Coalition
Western Broome Environmental Stakeholder Coalition
WNY Council on Occupational Safety & Health * Women's Voices for the Earth
Worksafe * Working Films**

January 16, 2009

Dear President-Elect Obama:

We are writing to express our deep concern over the Bush administration's departing gift to the chemical industry on October 15th, 2008 -- the formation of yet another review of the EPA's health assessment study on dioxins, one of the most toxic chemicals on earth.

We request that you direct the EPA to cancel the unnecessary review and release the Dioxin Reassessment so that the EPA and others can move forward in developing protective dioxin policies and standards.

The EPA completed its first report on dioxins in 1985, and began its reassessment in 1988. The EPA began its second reassessment in 1991. Since that time the completion of this report has been repeatedly delayed by the chemical industry for close to twenty years. The EPA already released a final draft in 2000 and an EPA Science Advisory Board (SAB) already reviewed this report in 2000-2001. In June, 2001, the EPA Science Advisory Board sent a letter to EPA Administrator Christine Whitman (see enclosed) urging the reassessment be completed and released 'expeditiously.' Since then it's been further delayed and another review is not necessary. This new review will take several years to complete at least, and will further delay regulation of this highly persistent bioaccumulative toxic (PBT) chemical.

Dioxins are a family of chemicals that are known to cause cancer and to disrupt the endocrine system. They are active in the body at very low levels. Dioxins can cause developmental and immune effects at levels close to those currently found in the general population. Every American eats dioxins when they consume fatty foods, and nearly every American has measurable levels of this chemical in their body. The toxicity of dioxins is of such concern that they have been targeted for global phase out by over 100 nations across the world through the

Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants. They've also been targeted for virtual elimination in the Great Lakes through the U.S. and Canadian Great Lakes Binational Toxics Strategy.

The EPA study—called the "Dioxin Reassessment"—still remains a draft, which has stymied the agency's development of federal regulations for over 15 years. Evidence has accumulated since EPA began its reassessment in 1988 that dioxins cause many other health problems even at low levels, including cancer, developmental problems in children, immunologic problems in children and adults, reproductive problems in adults, and diabetes.

In 1985, EPA concluded that there was an increased cancer risk in humans at dioxin exposure levels lower than had been estimated by any government agency anywhere in the world. Dioxin is the most potent carcinogen ever evaluated by the agency. Scientists at EPA have long concluded dioxins and dioxin-like compounds are highly toxic, but a strong coalition of industries responsible for generating dioxins as a by-product of production and disposal have successfully stalled the completion of this health assessment report for over 15 years. Chlorine-based industries have demanded reviews, reassessments and re-analyses. Each re-assessment and review affirmed the findings and newer scientific data continues to strengthen the conclusions that dioxins are a serious public health threat. Most recently, the National Academies released a 2006 report confirming what numerous scientific panels have concluded: dioxin is a potent cancer-causing chemical. The chlorine-based industry is following the tobacco industry's strategies to keep information from the public and delay release of the report. Enclosed is a document that summarizes these delays.

While panels are convened, people in communities across the country are continuing to be exposed to this highly toxic chemical. Many state regulating agencies have ignored dioxin contamination and risks because of the lack of a final health assessment from the EPA. Dioxin contamination is particularly high in areas with dioxin sources like incinerators, smelters, pulp and paper mills, chemical factories or other industries that use chlorine. These dioxin sources are predominantly located in low-income communities of color, making this a major issue of environmental justice and racism. The disposal of polyvinyl chloride (PVC) plastic is the largest source of dioxin-forming chlorine in solid waste. PVC is the leading contributor of chlorine to four combustion sources— municipal solid waste incinerators, backyard burn barrels, medical waste incinerators and secondary copper smelters—that account for an estimated 80% of dioxin air emissions. Residents living near PVC chemical plants in Mossville, LA had three times more dioxin in their blood than the average U.S. citizen. Dioxin has been found at hundreds of Superfund toxic waste sites. It was a contaminant at the Love Canal landfill in NY where over 900 families were relocated and in Agent Orange, the herbicide sprayed in Vietnam that resulted in major health impacts for Vietnam Veterans. Dioxins have been found in milk, cheese, beef, pork, fish, chicken, birds, deer, turkey, squirrel, and worms, as well as soil and sewage sludge.

We request that you direct the EPA to cancel the unnecessary review and release the Dioxin Reassessment so that the EPA and others can move forward in developing protective dioxin policies and standards.

We also request the opportunity to meet with your team to discuss this further. To schedule a meeting, please contact Mike Schade at CHEJ: (212) 964-3680 / mike@chej.org

Thank you for your attention to this critical public health and environmental justice issue.

Sincerely,

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Friends of the Earth US

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GAIA: Global Alliance for Incinerator
Alternatives/ Global Anti-Incinerator Alliance

Denny Larson
Global Community Monitor

Bill Owens, President
Glynn Environmental Coalition

Laura Weinberg, President
Great Neck Breast Cancer Coalition

Marnie Glickman, Executive Director
Green Change

Bradley Angel
Greenaction for Health and Environmental
Justice

Alan Muller, Executive Director
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Tyson Miller
Green Press Initiative

Rick Hind, Legislative Director
Greenpeace

Michael Heimbinder
Habitat Map

Edwin Revria, President
Hands Across The River Coalition

Bill Ravanese
Health Care Without Harm-Boston

Tom Lent, Policy Director
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Kathy Henry
Tittabawassee River Watch

Stephanie Smolen
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Liz Hitchcock, Public Health Advocate
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Enclosures: EPA Science Advisory Board 2001 letter to EPA Administrator Christine Whitman
History of Dangerous Delays on Dioxin Protective Policy