



WVE

Women's Voices for the Earth

EXHIBIT 17
DATE 3-23-05
SJ 15

Members of the Montana State Senate
Montana Senate
PO Box 200500
Helena, MT 59620-0500

Members of the Montana House of Representatives
Montana House of Representatives
PO Box 200400
Helena, MT 59620-0400

February 14, 2005

Dear Members of the 59th Montana State Legislature,

We, the undersigned, as members of the scientific and public health communities, wish to ask for your support of a joint resolution (SJ 15) to commit to the phasing out of polybrominated diphenylethers (PBDEs) in Montana.

PBDEs are a class of chemical flame retardants that are present in our cars, computers, furniture, home and office appliances and many other everyday consumer products. PBDEs are associated with learning and behavioral disorders, delayed sexual development and several types of cancer in laboratory experiments. Similar in physical structure to polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), which were banned by the federal government in 1977, PBDEs do not easily break down over time and accumulate in an individual's system.

Scientific research has shown that the most significant health risks associated with PBDEs stem from in utero exposure. International scientists are currently examining the presence of this chemical in breastmilk, grocery food (particularly meat, fish and dairy products) and household dust. Research shows these are all potential pathways of exposure to this ubiquitous chemical.

A recent study of 40 Northwest mothers, including ten from Montana, showed PBDE levels in breast milk of 6 to 321 parts per billion. Those figures are 20 to 40 times higher than levels found in European and Japanese women, and the highest level of PBDEs the survey encountered, 321 parts per billion, came from a woman here in Montana. This problem is almost certain to persist as the United States currently consumes 95 percent of the products containing the highest levels of PBDEs.

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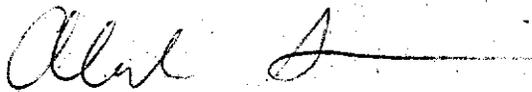
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While the scientific community continues to research the effects of PBDEs, legislators around the nation and the world have begun to take actions to curb their impacts on humans. California, Michigan, Hawaii, Maine and the European Union have all banned the use of certain PBDEs. Numerous companies, including IBM, Apple, Sony, IKEA and Volvo, which used to sell products containing PBDEs, have taken voluntary measures to eliminate or reduce the need for flame retardant chemicals (through innovative product design changes) or to use less toxic alternatives.

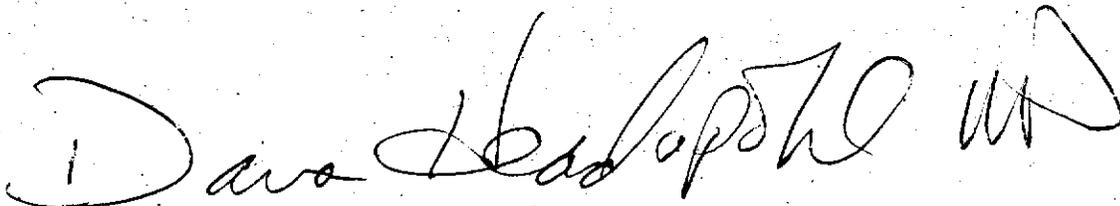
Now Montana has the chance to contribute to these national and global efforts. As members of the Montana State Legislature, you have been called upon to consider a joint resolution to support the phase out of PBDEs in our state. This resolution will encourage the continuation of important research on the effects of PBDEs, the development of alternatives and the promotion of businesses and products that are free of this toxic chemical.

For the sake of Montana's children, we urge you to support this important initiative.

Sincerely,



Alexandra Gorman
Director of Science and Research
Women's Voices for the Earth



Dr. Dana Headapohl, MD MPH
Director of Occupational & Environmental Health Services
Saint Patrick Hospital, Missoula

We, the undersigned, endorse the content of this letter and encourage the State of Montana to pass SJ15, a joint resolution to protect Montana's children from harmful chemicals by supporting the phase out of PBDEs:

1. Clayton H. McCracken, MD, Masters in Maternal/Child Health, Board Certified Pediatrics, **Billings**
2. Mary Strand, Lactation Consultant, Missoula County WIC, **Missoula**
3. Wade G. Hill, PhD, RN, Montana State University, **Bozeman**
4. Jackie Cenas, Lactation Consultant, Ravalli County WIC, **Hamilton**
5. Dr. Andrij Holian, PhD, Professor of Toxicology, University of Montana, **Missoula**
6. Cheryl M. Reichert, MD, PhD (Biochemistry), Pathologist, **Great Falls**
7. Cathy Powell, MSN, FNP, IBCLC, CCE, Community Medical Center, **Missoula**
8. Stacey Haugland, Certified Professional Midwife, **Bozeman**
9. Sandra Harshaw, RN, IBCLC, CCE, Community Medical Center, **Missoula**
10. Michelle Gnagey, BSN, RNC, BCLC, CCE, Community Medical Center, **Missoula**
11. Vicki White, RN, IBCLC, Community Medical Center, **Missoula**

