

MISSOULA  
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ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DIVISION  
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Wednesday, February 16, 2005

House Natural Resources Committee  
RE: HB 582EXHIBIT 6  
DATE 2.16.05  
582

Chairman Jim Peterson,

Chairman Peterson and members of the committee,

My name is Jim Carlson, I am director of Environmental Health at the Missoula City-County Health Department. The Missoula Public Health Department is in support of HB 582.

This bill would prevent the incineration or combustion PVC (polyvinyl-chloride) plastics in Montana. Because PVC's contain large amounts of chlorine and carbon, the combustion of PVC results in the recombination of these elements into compounds called dioxins. Dioxins are extremely toxic and they cause cancer in humans. Dioxins are the contaminant that caused adverse effects from Agent Orange in Viet Nam. EPA estimates that the risk for the general population based on dioxin exposure may exceed 1 in 1,000 increased chance of experiencing cancer related to dioxin exposure.

Dioxins are fat soluble and bio-accumulate in the food chain. Organisms that are higher in the food chain contain the highest levels of dioxin. Diets high in fish, meat and dairy products are correspondingly higher in dioxin content. Human breast milk can be a significant source of dioxin exposure for infants.

There is no safe level of dioxin exposure. One of the best ways to eliminate exposure by inhalation or ingestion is to eliminate PVC combustion.

In Missoula one air pollution source is currently allowed to burn up to 18 tons per day of plastics waste in an industrial boiler. A portion of this waste stream is PVC plastic. Because dioxins are created in this process, this waste stream should not be burned. It should be redirected to landfill or recycled. The dioxins created during combustion are an unnecessary and avoidable risk to public health and the environment.

For these reasons, we urge that you support HB 582.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Jim Carlson, R.S  
Director of Environmental Health