



WVE

Women's Voices for the Earth

EXHIBIT 8
DATE 2-16-05
HB 582

SAY YES TO HB 582! PROTECT PUBLIC HEALTH FROM PLASTIC BURNING

WHAT IS PVC (POLYVINYL CHLORIDE)?

Polyvinyl chloride, commonly known as "PVC" or "vinyl," is a common synthetic material. Piping, vinyl siding and vinyl flooring are the largest and most familiar uses of PVC. PVC is also found in windows, gutters, shower curtains, furniture, product packaging and many other plastic items.

PVC INCINERATION GENERATES TOXIC POLLUTION

PVC plastic is not designed to burn safely. PVC is engineered with numerous chemicals and metals to provide the desired strength, flexibility, color and other properties. When burned, these chemicals and metals are emitted from the stack or concentrated in the remaining ash. **Incineration of PVC is known to release a wide variety of pollutants into the air, such as dioxins and furans, lead, mercury, cadmium and organotins.** Waste incineration has been identified by EPA to be one of the top sources of dioxin-emissions in the country.

WHAT ARE THE HEALTH HAZARDS?

Emissions of hazardous air pollutants from PVC incineration can have serious adverse consequences on worker safety, public health and the environment. Dioxins, furans and heavy metals such as mercury, lead and cadmium are classified as persistent bioaccumulative toxins (PBTs). These pollutants degrade slowly or persist in the environment and tend to build up over time in humans and animal tissue, potentially to dangerous levels.

Dioxin and furan exposure has been linked to several types of **cancer, immune system disorders, diabetes, birth defects** and other health effects.

Mercury exposure is associated with **nervous system effects, delayed cognitive development and kidney dysfunction.**

Lead exposure can lead to **nervous system effects in children, miscarriages, birth defects, immune system dysfunction, and blood pressure problems.**

Cadmium exposure has been linked to **obstructive lung disease, kidney stones, kidney failure, prostate cancer and low birth weight.**

Organotins adversely affect the **central nervous system, skin, immune and reproductive system.**

INCINERATOR ASH IS ALSO POTENTIALLY HAZARDOUS

Incinerator ash can contain concentrated levels of heavy metals, dioxins and furans. If the ash is disposed of improperly, these toxins will leach into the environment.

INCINERATION OF PVC IS UNNECESSARY

Fortunately, very few facilities in Montana currently burn PVC. Community health concerns and increased costs associated with new regulations have contributed to this decline. Those facilities that continue to burn PVC have readily available alternatives for disposal. **We can prevent future potential contamination by prohibiting the burning of PVC today.**

Missoula Office

P.O. Box 8743

Missoula, Montana 59807

Phone: (406) 543-2747

Fax: (406) 542-5632

wve@womenandenvironment.org

www.womenandenvironment.org

Bozeman Office

P.O. Box 1067

Bozeman, Montana 59771

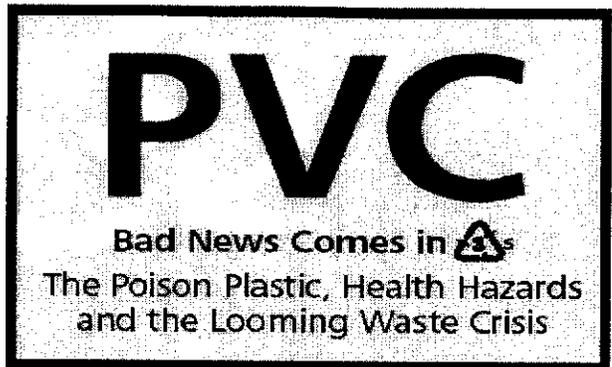
Phone: (406) 585-9009

Fax: (406) 585-5549

wve@womenandenvironment.org

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Summary of Major Findings



PVC Generation & the Looming Waste Crisis

- Worldwide, an estimated 300 billion pounds of longer-lasting PVC products, such as construction materials that last 30 to 40 years, will soon reach the end of their useful life and require replacement and disposal.
- As much as 7 billion pounds of PVC are discarded every year in the U.S.
- PVC disposal is the largest source of dioxin-forming chlorine and phthalates in solid waste, as well as a major source of lead, cadmium and organotins.
- Short-lived products account for more than 70% of PVC disposed in America's solid waste with 2 billion pounds discarded every year, including "blister packs" and other packaging, plastic bottles and plastic wrap.

Trouble From the Start: The Production & Use of PVC

- PVC production poses serious environmental health threats due to the manufacture of raw chemicals, including chlorine and cancer-causing vinyl chloride monomer.
- U.S. communities surrounding vinyl chloride chemical facilities, half of which are in Louisiana, suffer from groundwater and air pollution.
- PVC includes high amounts of toxic additives, which are released during use and disposal, resulting in elevated human exposures to chemicals.
- PVC use results in dioxin emissions from PVC products burned in 1 million annual U.S. fires of buildings and vehicles.

The Deadly Connection: PVC, Chlorine and Dioxin

- When burned, PVC plastic forms dioxins, a highly toxic group of chemicals that build up in the food chain.
- PVC is the major 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 (USEPA).

Don't Burn It: The Hazards of Burning PVC Waste

- More than 100 municipal waste incinerators in the U.S. burn 500 to 600 million pounds of PVC each year, forming highly toxic dioxins and releasing toxic additives to the air and in ash disposed of on land.
- Open burning of solid waste, which contains PVC, is a major source of dioxin air emissions. Backyard burning of PVC household trash is unrestricted in Michigan and Pennsylvania, partially restricted in 30 states and banned in 18 states.
- The incineration of medical waste is being steadily replaced by cleaner non-burn technologies.