

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500

Lisa Jackson
EPA Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Ariel Rios Building
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20460

April 28, 2009

Dear President Obama and EPA Administrator Jackson,

As community members living in dioxin-impacted neighborhoods, indigenous groups, Vietnam Vets concerned about Agent Orange, and health-affected groups concerned about endometriosis, breast cancer, reproductive health, and learning and developmental disabilities, we are writing to implore you to cancel the Science Advisory Board's review of EPA's Dioxin Reassessment, release this long awaited report, and move ahead in setting dioxin policies that will protect the health of our communities and the American people.

A municipal incinerator in Connecticut . . . a Dow chemical plant in Michigan . . . a medical waste incinerator in Florida. These are some of the ways dioxin, the most toxic man-made substance on earth, is produced and released into our communities. Every day, we continue to live with dioxin contamination in our neighborhoods, food, and bodies, while the EPA's Dioxin Reassessment study has been delayed for almost twenty years. As a result, we have been left to argue with our state agencies over how much cleanup is needed and what's a safe level of exposure.

Now, the EPA is proposing to form yet another scientific panel to review the dioxin report which will only delay the release of the report once again. According to the EPA's website, this next review will take until 2012 to complete. Enough is enough.

Dioxin is a byproduct of the manufacture and burning of products that contain chlorine. Plastics made of polyvinyl chloride (PVC) are a major culprit. So is paper that is bleached with chlorine or chlorine compounds. Incinerators across the country belch out this toxic substance every single day. Airborne, dioxin falls on farms, settles on plants and works its way up the food chain. Dioxin also gets into water from industrial discharges. Dioxin is now pervasive in fish, beef, milk, poultry, pork and eggs. Infants are even exposed to dioxin in breast milk.

Dioxin has been ranked among the most dangerous of chemicals, a "known human carcinogen," by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC). Dioxin has been linked to liver, lung, stomach, soft and connective tissue cancers as well as Non-Hodgkins lymphoma.

Learning disabilities, birth defects, male and female infertility, endometriosis and diabetes have all been linked to dioxin exposure. Dioxin weakens the human immune system and decreases the level of the

male hormone testosterone. It can disrupt the proper function of hormones -- chemical messengers that the body uses for growth and regulation.

The EPA was poised to warn Americans about dioxin in 1994. But under industry pressure, the agency postponed their report. Now, fifteen years later, under pressure from the chemical industry, that study has still not been released and our communities suffer as a result.

We have a right to air, water, soil and food free of dioxin. We the undersigned believe the public has a right to know about the health consequences of exposure to dioxin.

We urge you to cancel the Science Advisory Board's review of EPA's Dioxin Reassessment, release this long awaited report, and move ahead in setting dioxin policies that will protect the health of the our communities and the American people.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

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CC: Nancy Sutley, Chair, the White House Council on Environmental Quality

Enclosure: Quotes from Dioxin-Impacted Communities