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EPA Acts on New Chemical Law to Fast-Track Five Chemicals

WASHINGTON - EPA is taking swift steps to carry out requirements in the Frank R. Lautenberg Chemical Safety for the 21st Century Act to reform the Toxic Substances Control Act and to reduce exposure to certain persistent, bioaccumulative, and toxic (PBT) chemicals.

“The threats from persistent, bioaccumulative and toxic chemicals are well-documented,” said Jim Jones, assistant administrator in EPA’s office of chemical safety and pollution prevention. “The new law directs us to expedite action to reduce risks for these chemicals, rather than spending more time evaluating them. We are working to ensure the Frank R. Lautenberg Chemical Safety Act signed in June of this year delivers on the promise of better protecting the environment and public health as quickly as possible.”

The five chemicals to receive expedited action are:

- Decabromodiphenyl ethers (DecaBDE), used as a flame retardant in textiles, plastics and polyurethane foam;
- Hexachlorobutadiene (HCBD), used in the manufacture of rubber compounds and lubricants and as a solvent;
- Pentachlorothio-phenol (PCTP), used as an agent to make rubber more pliable in industrial uses;
- Tris (4-isopropylphenyl) phosphate, used as a flame retardant in consumer products and other industrial uses; and
- 2,4,6-Tris(tert-butyl)phenol, used as a fuel, oil, gasoline or lubricant additive.

The statutory deadline for EPA to propose action is June 22, 2019.

The new law gave manufacturers an opportunity to request by September 19, 2016, that EPA conduct risk evaluations for the PBT chemicals on EPA’s 2014 Work Plan, as an alternative to expedited action. Requests for risk evaluations were made for two chemicals that can be used in fragrance mixtures.

For the remaining PBT chemicals, EPA must move ahead to take expedited action to reduce exposure to those chemicals to the extent practicable. After EPA finishes identifying where these chemicals are used and how people are exposed to them, the Agency will move directly to propose limitations on their use.

PBT chemicals are of particular concern because they remain in the environment for significant periods of time and concentrate in the organisms exposed to them. These pollutants can transfer among air, water, and land, and span boundaries of geography and generations.

The new amendments to TSCA will help bring significant improvements to public health as EPA continues to take the steps necessary for its successful implementation.

More about the Frank R. Lautenberg Chemical Safety for the 21st Century Act and EPA's implementation activities and to sign up for updates, visit: <https://www.epa.gov/assessing-and-managing-chemicals-under-tsca/frank-r-lautenberg-chemical-safety-21st-century-act>

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