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Media Release

Immediate Release

Thursday November 27, 2014

Environment and Health Groups call on Canadian Government to Prohibit Triclosan in All Products

Today, over 50 public interest and not-for-profit groups from Canada and the US are calling on the Canadian Federal Government to take urgent action to prohibit the use of triclosan in consumer and institutional products. Triclosan is used in a wide range of products including antibacterial soaps, cosmetics, treated textiles office and school products, kitchenware and other products that are generally labelled as ‘antibacterial,’ ‘fights odours’ or ‘kills germs’. Triclosan is now one of the top 10 contaminants of American rivers¹ and a noted chemical of concern in the Great Lakes basin². Triclosan has been detected in drinking water, breast milk and household dust. Ninety-five percent of triclosan in consumer products goes down the drain and is highly toxic to aquatic organisms.

In March 2012, the Canadian Government released its Preliminary Assessment Report for Triclosan. It proposed that triclosan should be declared ‘toxic’ under the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act* due to risk posed to wildlife living in rivers and lakes, particularly downstream from wastewater treatment plants. A growing body of research also shows that in addition to these risks posed by wastewater effluent, triclosan is also present in sewage sludge which when applied to land can enter into animal feed and crops destined for human consumption, as well as contaminate terrestrial wildlife. However to date no action has been taken although the Canadian government states that a risk management plan will be produced in Spring 2015³.

Since the Preliminary Assessment was released over two years ago, evidence continues to mount about triclosan’s human health impacts. A study released early November demonstrated that triclosan promotes liver tumours⁴. Triclosan has been shown to disrupt the hormonal system in animals and another new study found that 50% of babies’ cord blood contained triclosan⁵. This chemical poses a direct risk to the delicate balance of thyroid hormone in pregnant women, critical to healthy brain development *in utero*.

Triclosan’s link to antibiotic resistance is of further high concern. The Canadian Medical Association has called upon the federal government to **ban** the sale of household antibacterial products due to the risk of bacterial resistance⁶. Yet, these product sales continue despite the fact that both the Public Health Agency of Canada and the US Food and Drug Administration have

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indicated that soaps with added antibacterial ingredients, such as triclosan, are no more effective than the mechanical action of washing with plain soap and water.

In May this year the State of Minnesota became the first state to pass a **regulation banning** the retail sale of any cleaning product for sanitizing or hand and body cleansing that contains triclosan after January 1, 2017.

Groups are calling on the Canadian government to:

- *Officially declare triclosan to be toxic under CEPA, 1999;*
- *Implement a phase-out of triclosan in all consumer and institutional products, with priority given to cleaning and personal care products, with mandatory product labelling*
- *Adopt a framework of Informed Substitution and ensure that Triclocarban, a similar chemical, is prohibited so that industry does not adopt a regrettable substitution and require transparent alternative assessments if chemical biocides are shown to be necessary in specific cases.*

Referenced NGO Statement is available [here](#).

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To arrange a media call, contact:

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ENDNOTES

¹Rolf U. Halden. On the Need and Speed of Regulating Triclosan and Triclocarban in the United States. *Environ. Sci. Technol.* 2014, 48, 3603-3611. American Chemical Society.

²Alliance for the Great Lakes. Emerging Contaminant Threats and the Great Lakes: Existing science, estimating relative risk and determining policies. 2011.

³Government of Canada. Chemical Substances. Triclosan. <http://www.chemicalsubstanceschimiques.gc.ca/plan/approche-approche/triclosan-eng.php#a1>

⁴Mei-Fei Yueh et al. The commonly used antimicrobial additive triclosan is a liver tumor promoter. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America.*

⁵BF Pycke et al. Human fetal exposure to triclosan and triclocarban in an urban population from Brooklyn, New York. *Environ Sci Technol.* 2014 Aug 5;48(15):8831-8. doi: 10.1021/es501100w. Epub 2014 Jul 15.

⁶⁶Canadian Medical Association. Policy resolution GC09-90 - Household antibacterial products. http://policybase.cma.ca/dbtw-wpd/exec/dbtwpub.dll?AC=GET_RECORD&XC=/dbtw-wpd/exec/dbtwpub.dll&BU=http%3A%2F%2Fpolicybase.cma.ca%2Fdbtw-wpd%2FCMAPolicy%2FPublicB.htm&TN=PubPol&SN=AUTO5455&SE=2660&RN=0&MR=20&TR=0&TX=1000&ES=0&CS=1&XP=&RF=Public%3E+TableDE&EF=&DF=Display%3E+English&RL=0&EL=0&DL=1&NP=3&ID=&MF=wpengmsgcmapolicypublicB.ini&MQ=&TI=0&DT=&ST=0&IR=1336&NR=0&NB=0&SV=0&SS=0&BG=&FG=000000&QS=Staff&OEX=ISO-8859-1&OEH=ISO-8859-1