Message

From: Arlene Blum [arlene@greensciencepolicy.org]
Sent: 5/6/2014 3:30:54 PM
To: Jones, Jim [Jones.Jim@epa.gov]
Subject: Go flame retardant-free this spring!

Dear Jim,
Last week our team enjoyed the Goldman Environmental Prize Event. You can enjoy excellent short videos about inspirational prize winners here. The Green Science Policy Team is speaking at events around the country in the next months. We hope to see many of you there. Or stop by my booth at the Berkeley Himalayan Fair in Berkeley's Live Oak Park on Saturday and Sunday May 17 & 18, 2014. Please scroll down for our event calendar.
Happy Spring,
Arlene and the Green Science Policy Team

Goldman Prize 2014 Recipients

Parent's Guide to Flame Retardants fact sheet

Check out our fact sheet, updated by Sam, "Parent's Guide to Flame Retardants" for tips on how to reduce your family's exposure to flame retardants. The flyer states: "Americans have some of the highest measured levels in the world of flame retardants in their blood. Toddlers have 3 to 4 times the flame retardants in their bodies when compared with their moms". Read more on the possible harmful impact of such exposures below.

Science: Brominated flame retardants, phthalates and the brain

"We are conducting a massive clinical toxicological trial,

and our children and our children's children are the experimental subjects."

Herbert Needleman and Philip Landrigan, 1994

A recent review of 24 peer-reviewed studies found that low levels of maternal exposure to brominated flame retardants, phthalates, and other environmental contaminants impacted children's cognitive and behavioral development.

Read the abstract here.

The informative Chemical Brain Drain website states: "Today, one out of every six children suffers from some form of neurodevelopmental abnormality.... Some environmental chemicals are known to cause brain damage and many more are suspected of it."

Read more about the developmental risks posed by endocrine disrupting chemicals:

The Atlantic: "The Toxins that Threaten Our Brains" 18 March, 2014

Environmental Health Perspectives: "Clues to Autistic Behaviors: Exploring the Role of Endocrine Disruptors"1 May, 2014

Safer Sofa Foam Exchange ready to begin

Are you considering buying new furniture without flame retardants now that these chemicals are no longer needed? Since most of the flame retardants are in the cushions, a less expensive alternative to replacing your furniture is replacing the foam in cushions with flame retardant free foam.

A web page with more information is here and you can sign up here to get connected with four foam and upholstery stores in the San Francisco Bay Area participating in our **Safer Sofa Foam Exchange**. You can bring or mail in your cushions and the flame retarded foam will be swapped out.

Foam collected through our Exchange will be used for scientific research on responsible disposal. Part of the cost of the new foam sales will fund this research and also policy efforts to keep flame retardant furniture out of landfills and low income communities.

Also, furniture without flame retardants is becoming increasingly available. If you are shopping for new furniture, look for a TB117-2013 tag, and verify with the retailer that products do not contain flame retardants. Note that the new standard does NOT ban the use of flame retardants. Here is a list of companies that state they sell flame retardant free furniture.

You can watch award-winning Consumer Watch reporter Julie Watts swapping out her flame retarded cushions here.

Flame retardants - Are they the firefighter's friend?

Research studies show that when products treated with halogenated flame retardants burn, they release more soot, smoke and toxic gases, than if they were untreated.

Flame retardants slow the ignition, but they do not prevent combustion. When a treated sofa or insulation does catch fire, the flame retardants burn. And larger amounts of carbon monoxide, and hydrogen cyanide result. These put occupants and firefighters at increased risk. In a recent study examining the blood of fire fighters, abnormally high levels of brominated dioxins/furans (PBDD/Fs) were found. These could be a result from the burning of flame retardants. Firefighters have relatively high levels of four kinds of cancer that are associated with dioxin/furan exposure. (Thanks to Paul Podell)

The flame retardants in our living and work spaces could present a long term health threat to also emergency workers and firefighters as well as to occupants.

Himalayan Fair May 17 & 18, 2014

Please join me at this year's Himalayan Fair in Live Oak Park, 1300 Shattuck Avenue in North Berkeley, California. You can enjoy the food, music, dance, crafts and arts of the Himalayan regions.
Please stop by my booth under the big tree northeast of the stage to visit and enjoy the entertainment. Contact me if you'd like to volunteer to help tend my booth.
The fair's profits go directly to the Himalayan regions as donations to orphanages, clinics, schools, village water supplies, and other Himalayan charities.
I describe starting the Fair after returning from the Great Himalayan Traverse in my memoir "Breaking Trail". Get in touch if you might like to volunteer to help organize this fun Himalayan community event. More information about the Himalayan Fair is here.

Calendar of Upcoming Events

Tuesday, May 6, 2014:
Safer Alternatives to Priority Chemicals Workshop at the Safer Consumer Products Summit in San Jose, CA. Arlene will present a plenary lecture on *Chemical Classes of Concern: Reducing their Use in Consumer Products.* Information here
Thursday, May 8, 2014, 11 am - 2 pm: UCSF's annual LivingGreen fair at Millberry Union Game Room in San Francisco. Stephen will represent the Green Science Policy Institute at the showcase. Information here

Thursday, May 15: Build It Green workshop on buildings and health at the David Brower Center in Berkeley, CA. Arlene will speak about reducing the use of "Six Classes" of harmful chemicals. Information

here.

Thursday, May 22, 2014: the Living Future unConference in Portland, OR. Simona will speak during panel presentation on, "Opening the Black Box: Understanding and Reducing the Use of Harmful Chemicals in Human Habitat." Information here.

Thursday, May 22, 2014: UL Furniture Flammability and Human Health Summit in Atlanta, GA. Avery will present on updates to furniture flammability standards in the US and the UK.

Friday and Saturday,
June 13 - 14, 2014: The Sustainable Furnishings Council (SFC) in Washington, DC.
The HBO documentary *Toxic Hot Seat* will be screened on the evening of Thursday, June 12. Dr. Donald Lucas will speak on on reducing toxic chemicals in the home environment. Information here
June 22 - 24, 2014: 14th Annual Workshop on Brominated and Other Flame Retardants in Indianapolis, IN. Arlene will chair a session on policy June 24. View the schedule and find more information here.

August 31 - September 5, 2014: 34th International Symposium on Halogenated Persistent Organic Pollutants: Dioxin 2014 in Madrid, Spain. Arlene and Simone will lead a day-long Science and Policy workshop on Sunday, August 3. Information here.

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Please consider contributing to protecting our health and environment from toxic chemicals by clicking here to give a gift to the Green Science Policy Institute.

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