



Center for Health, Environment & Justice

NEWS RELEASE

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State Purchasing Committee Considers Chemical Avoidance List Recommendation

Doctor, Environmental Experts & Chemical Industry to Speak at Tuesday Meeting

Albany, NY – On Tuesday, December 22nd, 2009, from 1:30 - 4:00 PM, the NYS Interagency Committee on Sustainability and Green Procurement will hold a special meeting to hear presentations from environmental health experts and a chemical industry trade association on whether to adopt a Chemical Avoidance List to guide the state's purchasing practices. The event will be held at Meeting Room 5, Concourse Level, Empire State Plaza, Albany, NY.

The Committee is considering a recommendation submitted by the Governor's Sustainability and Green Procurement Advisory Council to establish a Chemical Avoidance List which includes: 1) persistent, bioaccumulative toxic chemicals (PBTs); 2) chemicals known or reasonably anticipated to be a human carcinogen; 3) polybrominated diphenylethers (PBDEs); 4) bisphenol A; and 5) perfluorinated compounds. The Advisory Council approved the recommendation by a vote of 9 to 1.

Speakers include Dr. Ted Schettler, Science Director of Science and Environmental Health Network (www.sehn.org) and Collaborative on Health and Environment www.healthandenvironment.org), with a master's in public health from Harvard University. Dr. Schettler is co-author of *Generations at Risk: Reproductive Health and the Environment*, *In Harm's Way: Toxic Threats to Child Development*, and *Environmental Threats to Healthy Aging*. Anne Rabe, Center for Health, Environment & Justice, and Patti Wood, Grassroots Environmental Education, will be speaking as members of the Governor's Advisory Council. A representative of the American Chemistry Council will be speaking in opposition to the recommendation.

Dr. Ted Schettler, Science and Environmental Health Network, stated, "The proposed Green Purchasing Chemical Avoidance List includes toxic substances with extremely hazardous properties, such as cancer-causing agents or substances known to be extremely persistent in the environment as well as toxic. I urge the state's Interagency Committee to adopt this list. It will enable the state to use its purchasing power to "green" the marketplace and help reduce the use of chemicals posing public health threats to New Yorkers, workers, waste handlers, and recyclers. A growing number of states and municipalities are

enacting similar green purchasing programs and I hope New York will join this growing trend to better protect the state's environment and public health. "

Karen Joy Miller, Huntington Breast Cancer Action Coalition, Inc and an Advisory Council member said, "Diseases are not caused by genetic factors alone. Health advocates strongly believe the rise in cancer, diabetes, developmental disorders, asthma, obesity are a direct outcome of our exposures to industrial era chemicals. While scientific advances help us to identify the environmental agents that do indeed contribute to disease, we must see meaningful advances in public policy. New York State must adopt the green procurement chemical avoidance list."

Patti Wood, Executive Director of the Grassroots Environmental Education and an Advisory Council member, said, "The inclusion of a chemical avoidance list in New York State's green procurement program encourages the growth of green industries and enables manufacturers to reevaluate their product's chemical formulations with the goal of protecting the health and safety of state employees and their families, the citizens of New York State and the environment."

Anne Rabe of the national Center for Health, Environment & Justice, and an Advisory Council member, said, "This Chemical Avoidance List would help the state to strategically implement the priority attention to toxic substances embodied in Executive Order 4. It would put the marketplace on notice that these are the chemicals the state wants to avoid. We hope the Interagency Committee will support the Council's recommendation and enable New York to join the growing trend of governments seeking to reduce their toxic footprint and better protect the state's environment and public health."

Laura Weinberg, President of Great Neck Breast Cancer Coalition said, "Protecting public health should be New York State's Inter-Agency officials' number one priority and goal, especially for our Department of Health. By adopting this list of chemical carcinogens as a guideline to avoid purchasing of toxic products will be a responsible step for New York State in order to meet that goal."

About CHEJ

The Center for Health, Environment & Justice exists to mentor the movement to build healthier communities by empowering people to prevent harm in as many ways, and for as many people, as possible. We believe this can happen when people and groups have the power to play an integral role in promoting human health and environmental integrity. CHEJ's role is to provide the tools, the direction, and the encouragement to these people and groups, so that they can build strong, healthy communities where they live, work, learn, shop, play and pray. Following her successful effort to prevent further harm for the people living in contaminated Love Canal, Lois Gibbs founded CHEJ in 1981 in order to continue mentoring others seeking to prevent harm. CHEJ provides mentoring assistance to communities, homeowners, families and individuals throughout the country. To date, CHEJ has assisted over 10,000 groups nationwide. Currently, CHEJ is mentoring community groups in Florida, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina and Ohio. Details on CHEJ's efforts to help people and communities prevent harm can be found at <http://chej.org/>.