

WASHINGTON
TOXICS
COALITION

Alternatives

protecting health by preventing pollution

Legislature Supports Phaseout of Persistent Toxic Chemicals

Sibyl Diver

When new moms talk about toxic chemicals building up in their breast milk, legislators stop to listen. This March, the Washington State Legislature agreed to restore \$325,000 in funding to the Department of Ecology's first-in-the-nation program to phase out persistent toxic chemicals (Ecology's PBT program). The money will be used for developing a phaseout plan for toxic flame retardants called PBDEs and for implementation of the state's mercury phaseout plan.

"The writing is on the wall. Chemicals that wind up in our breast milk and in our bodies and that threaten our children's health must be phased out," said Laurie Valeriano, policy director for the Washington Toxics Coalition and breastfeeding mother of twins.

The legislative support followed the release of a study that found high levels of toxic flame retardants in the breast milk of Puget Sound area women. Breastfeeding moms who were part of the Northwest Environment Watch study brought their message and their babies to the state capitol to help make this a real issue for policy makers during the final week of the legislative session.

"Mothers have a right to nourish their babies with wombs and milk that are free from contamination," said Dr. MaryAnn O'Hara, a Seattle physician and expert on breastfeeding. This year policymakers responded to increasing public concern about our growing body burden of toxic chemicals.

Ecology's program was launched in 2000 with a vision and plan for the state to reduce and eliminate persistent toxic chemicals by 2020. The program's funding was eliminated in 2003 by the Legislature after intense opposition by the Association of Washington Businesses and others. Gov. Locke took action in January 2004 by issuing an Executive Order directing Ecology to move forward



(l-r) WTC volunteer Sarah Robertson, Nancy Dickeman (WPSR), Dave Heywood, MD (WPSR board), and Toxic-Free Legacy Coalition Coordinator Sibyl Diver met with legislators in Olympia in March to push for funding.

on phasing out mercury and toxic flame retardants, which was key in restoring the funding. The governor also jump-started the efforts by providing \$100,000 from the state's emergency fund.

"We applaud the governor and the Legislature for helping to make Washington a leader in protecting public health and the environment from persistent toxic chemicals," said Dr. Charles Weems, board member of Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility (WPSR).

The funding in the final budget will support Ecology's efforts to develop the phaseout plan for toxic flame retardants (\$83,000), implement its mercury phaseout plan (\$159,000), and conduct rulemaking (\$83,000). One major piece of the program that was not funded was monitoring fish for mercury contamination (\$111,000). Opposition to the testing came from the pulp-and-paper industry. The fish monitoring is used to measure the

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Clean Water for Salmon



Bush Administration Takes Aim at Endangered Species Protections from Harmful Pesticides

Erika Schreder

Since 2002, the Washington Toxics Coalition and our partners have had great success winning protections for salmon from pesticides under the Endangered Species Act. More recently, a number of groups around the country have filed similar lawsuits to protect fish and wildlife from pesticides. These suits seek to compel the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to follow the rules it has long ignored and consult with federal fish and wildlife agencies on the effects of pesticides.

Now, the pesticide industry has convinced the Bush administration to change endangered species rules rather than comply with them. In late January, the Bush administration issued regulations that will weaken protections for endangered species from pesticides by greatly reducing the requirement that the EPA consult with fish and wildlife agencies.

“Rather than following the current law and working to improve their terrible record protecting fish and wildlife from pesticides, the Bush administration chose instead to change the process so EPA can continue to favor the needs of the pesticide industry over the needs of wildlife,” said Patti Goldman of Earthjustice.

The regulations, called “counterpart regulations,” will allow EPA in many cases to continue allowing pesticide uses that threaten fish and wildlife without the checks and balances required by the Endangered Species Act. Under the Act, any federal agency taking an action that may affect species listed as threatened or endangered must conduct a full evaluation of impacts in consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or the National Marine Fisheries Service. Under the new rules, EPA would not be required to consult on all pesticides that may affect listed species. This would eliminate the expert fish and wildlife agency review of the scientific evidence that serves as an independent check and safeguard.

The new rules would also do the following:

- ❖ require fish and wildlife agencies to defer to EPA’s assessments of pesticides and views even where EPA lacks species expertise or the expert scientists disagree with EPA’s views;

- ❖ allow outdated science to be the basis for determining whether and the extent to which endangered species must be protected from pesticides; and
- ❖ give the chemical industry special participation rights that are not shared by the public.

The EPA Already Ignores its Obligation to Consult with Wildlife Agency Experts

The EPA has an abysmal track record when it comes to fulfilling its legal obligation to consult with fish and wildlife agencies on pesticides. For example, EPA did not begin the mandated process to protect salmon from pesticides until ordered to do so by a federal court in 2002, thirteen years after salmon were listed under the Endangered Species Act. When EPA has conducted the required consultations, it has often not carried out the results; it continues to authorize use of pesticides that the Fish and Wildlife Service found will cause jeopardy to endangered species.

EPA regularly authorizes the use of pesticides that it has found to be harmful to fish or wildlife without putting mitigation measures into place, and it has never established a program for protecting endangered species.

EPA Lacks Sufficient Scientific Expertise to Assess Wildlife Risks

Wildlife agency experts have repeatedly called into question the guidelines and assessments that EPA has prepared and conducted. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service have long voiced concern that EPA focuses too exclusively on pesticide-caused mortality to fish and wildlife and does not adequately consider more subtle impacts such as effects on behavior and the immune system.

Moreover, EPA lacks expertise on the status and habitat needs of endangered species. EPA’s assessment of the pesticide diazinon acknowledges that EPA lacked knowledge about young Chinook salmon life cycles and habitat needs.

Conservation groups from around the country are opposing the proposal. The groups are particularly troubled by the support the proposal is

“It’s not biology but political science at the heart of these schemes.”

– Rodger Schlickeisen, Defenders of Wildlife

Continued on page 3, please see Regulations

... Continued**Regulations** *continued from page 2*

receiving from high-level officials in the Department of Interior and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, which oversee the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service. Groups submitted evidence that the Services' current positions regarding EPA methodologies directly contradict past positions.

"It's not biology but political science at the heart of these schemes," said Rodger Schlickeisen, president of Defenders of Wildlife. "Time and again, industry doesn't like what the scientists say, so science gets the boot."

Phaseout *continued from page 1*

success of efforts to reduce mercury pollution and to provide data to the Department of Health for issuing fish advisories.

In the coming months Ecology will be developing the phaseout plan for toxic flame retardants and the rule that will establish the list of chemicals for phaseout. These are important opportunities for getting involved. Please watch for our alerts or visit our website for updates.

This year's victory was achieved thanks to a focused coalition effort. Supporters from the Toxic-Free Legacy Coalition, environmental community, the public-health community, faith-based organizations, green-building partners, and fishing groups all mobilized around the issue. Citizens sent thousands of letters and made hundreds of calls to decision makers.

Key legislators who fought to restore the Ecology program included Reps. Cooper, Linville, Chopp, Sommers, Hunter, Ruderman, and Sens. Carlson, Fraser, Finkbeiner, and Zarelli.

"This victory for the environment and public health was truly a bipartisan effort," said Clifford Traisman, state lobbyist for Washington Conservation Voters and Washington Environmental Council. "Without leadership from both sides of the aisle, it would have never happened."

The healthcare community in particular played an important role by emphasizing how Ecology's program protects public health. "Rather than studying increased diseases in our children in the future, we can take steps now to keep these chemicals out of our environment and our bodies and

Northwest groups opposing the rule change include the Washington Toxics Coalition, Northwest Coalition for Alternatives to Pesticides, Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations, People for Puget Sound, Washington Environmental Council, Northwest Ecosystem Alliance, and many others.

"Our nation's most imperiled species are regularly exposed to harmful pesticides. Instead of working to protect endangered wildlife, the Administration wants to remove the scientific input of wildlife biologists who are finding pesticides to be a serious concern," said Aimee Code, water quality coordinator for the Northwest Coalition for Alternatives to Pesticides. ■

prevent disease. This is the most cost-effective way to protect our children and the public health of communities throughout Washington state," said Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility (WPSR) board member Tim Takaro, MD, MPH.

WPSR delivered a letter to Washington senators signed by 125 public-health professionals who supported Ecology's PBT program. The Washington State Medical Association, the Washington Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Washington Academy of Family Physicians, the Washington State Association of Occupational Health Nurses, and the Washington State Nurses Association all wrote letters of support representing thousands of physicians and nurses statewide.

But now is also the time to celebrate. "This is a huge win for children and the environment," said Ivy Sager-Rosenthal, environmental advocate for the Washington Public Interest Research Group (WashPIRG). "The legislature has now given its seal of approval to protecting children's health and ridding our environment of these harmful chemicals."

Special thanks go to supporters and partners who played an integral role in making this success happen. This includes individuals who attended public meetings, submitted letters to the editor, testified before the House committee, collected postcard signatures, wrote or called state representatives, entered database information, provided funding support, or who contributed in other ways. We could not have won this great victory without you. ■

"The legislature has now given its seal of approval to protecting children's health and ridding our environment of these harmful chemicals."

***– Ivy Sager-Rosenthal
WashPIRG***

Clean Water for Salmon



Poisoned Playgrounds: Survey Finds Widespread Use of Hazardous Pesticides in Washington Public Schools

Angela Storey

A majority of Washington's children attend school in districts using pesticides that could cause serious long-term health problems such as cancer and nervous system damage, finds *A Lesson in Prevention*, a new report by the Washington Toxics Coalition. The report documents pesticide use by 50 of the state's largest school districts (50 of 58 districts with more than 5,000 students).

Our children can't succeed in school where there are poisons on the playground and chemicals in the classroom that can harm their ability to learn, states the report. School districts should eliminate the use of hazardous pesticides and replace them with safer methods.

The report finds that:

- ❖ 96% of Washington's largest school districts use high hazard pesticides linked to cancer, reproductive or developmental harm, nervous system damage, or endocrine (hormone) disruption.
- ❖ Many districts are not tracking pesticide use as required by state law.
- ❖ Some school districts are breaking the trend, successfully reducing and eliminating the use of hazardous pesticides.

Since these districts are the state's largest, these findings mean that a majority of Washington's children (67%) attend school in districts using high hazard pesticides.

The report calls on school districts to eliminate the use of all high hazard pesticides and adopt policies to replace pesticide use with safer alternatives. School districts should also keep full records of pesticide use and prepare the annual summary required by the Children's Pesticide Right-to-Know Act, which took effect in July 2002.

The report also calls on state legislators to ban school use of the most hazardous pesticides and to provide training and other support for schools to adopt safer alternatives.

Six school districts in Washington have shown that they can eliminate the most harmful pesticides

City of Snohomish Adopts Policy to Reduce Pesticide Use

Angela Storey

This March, the City of Snohomish joined a growing number of cities that are putting human and environmental health first by choosing to reduce and eliminate the use of pesticides on city property.

"We should be setting an example for our community by maintaining our parks and public areas without the use of pesticides that could harm our health," says City Councilmember Lya Badgley, a major supporter of the policy.

The City had been on a path of pesticide reduction for a number of years and was already maintaining roadsides without the use of herbicides. This policy solidifies the City's dedication to using pest-prevention techniques and using only least-toxic chemicals as a last resort. The policy does not allow the use of pesticides that are linked to cancer, nervous system damage, reproductive or developmental harm, or endocrine (hormone) disruption in humans, or to impacts on the environment. It will eventually phase out the use of all pesticides.

"We have a responsibility to our children to leave a legacy of environmental protection," Councilmember Badgley adds. "Snohomish has such a wonderful quality of life, we should be able to manage our natural resources while keeping our children and streams safe and healthy into the future."

For information on working with your city government to adopt a pesticide-reduction policy, contact Pesticides Organizer Angela Storey at 206-632-1545 ext. 11 or astorey@watoxics.org. ■

The report calls on state legislators to ban school use of the most hazardous pesticides.

and still have attractive landscapes and safe buildings. Our state leaders need to take action now to make the rest of Washington's school districts safe for our kids by banning high hazard pesticides.

The full text of the report, including information on pesticide use by these 50 districts, can be found at: www.watoxics.org.

To start working with your local district to reduce pesticide use, contact Angela Storey at 206-632-1545 ext. 11 or astorey@watoxics.org. ■

Toxic-Free Legacy

Building Markets for Preferable Products

Brandie Smith

Eliminating polyvinyl chloride (PVC) ... using government purchasing power to demand safer alternatives ... shifting markets ... "Blue Vinyl" ... what do all of these phrases really mean? Over the past two years, an exciting element of our Toxic-Free Legacy campaign has been focused on combating persistent toxic pollution by working with communities and local governments on adopting policies that reduce and eliminate the purchase of toxic products such as PVC and chlorine-bleached paper. Since this campaign began in 2001, there has been so much momentum building around market transformation that we thought it was time to share with all of you some of the highlights and hopes for the future.

With any successful campaign, it is essential to educate and engage the community in the issues. We have been so fortunate to have an engaging tool for accomplishing this goal: the film "Blue Vinyl." This award-winning movie offers an in-depth look into the PVC industry and manages to captivate audiences at the same time. Recently, we participated in a showing of this movie in Olympia, where more than 100 people packed the room and engaged in a lively discussion following the movie. This event is only one of many that we have had over the past two years that have helped educate communities about persistent toxic chemicals. "Blue Vinyl" is a must see, and I'm not just saying that because I have it memorized.

Many of you may remember the beautiful day when the City of Seattle passed the first-in-the-nation policy to phase out the purchase of products contributing to persistent toxic pollution. We do, that's for sure. By taking that step, the City of Seattle demonstrated its commitment to using its purchasing power to begin to shift the market away from purchasing products like PVC to purchasing safer alternatives that are gentler on the earth and our health. Since that time, the City of Olympia and the government of Clark County have emerged as leaders in the state for considering these purchasing policies. Both places are actively working on policies to reduce and eliminate the purchase of these products.

Right now we have a perfect opportunity at the state level to demand alternatives to products

contributing to persistent toxic pollution. In January, Gov. Locke issued an Executive Order that addresses, among other things, the purchase of products contributing to persistent toxic pollution. One of the provisions orders the General Accounting Office to ask for bids and offer contracts for products that do not contribute to persistent toxic pollution. Imagine the powerful opportunities for shifting the market if local governments and institutions purchasing off the state contract choose to purchase healthier alternatives. When more people choose alternatives to products contributing to persistent toxic pollution, the costs of these



The house was packed with Olympia-area citizens gathered to watch a screening of the film "Blue Vinyl" and participate in a question-and-answer session about avoiding polyvinyl chloride, hosted by the Healthy Olympia Task Force.

alternatives will decrease and become more readily available to everyone.

Looking ahead, we see exciting opportunities to work with the private sector, specifically developers, in advancing our strategy to shift the market away from PVC to safer alternatives. This journey has begun and we look forward to achieving concrete results. Change is on the horizon, but it is going to take all of us working together to make it a reality. As consumers, we all have the power to make purchasing decisions that will eventually transform the market. Working together will just ensure that we get there faster. ■

Creative Ways to Support WTC

Create a Toxic-Free Legacy Through Your Will

The Easiest Way to Leave a Lasting Gift to Washington Toxics Coalition

A bequest is as simple as it is powerful. With a few words in your will, you can continue to be an advocate for a clean and healthy future beyond your lifetime. Chances are, even after you have made adequate provisions for your family and friends, you can have a bigger impact than you ever thought possible — and you don't have to be wealthy to do it!

When you make a bequest, you will have made a significant gift to the health of future generations.

What You Need to Know

If you are already prepared to name Washington Toxics Coalition in your will, you will need a few facts about us:

1. Legal Name and Address — Washington Toxics Coalition is a 501(c)3 tax-exempt charitable organization, located at 4649 Sunnyside Avenue North, Suite 540, Seattle, WA, 98103.
2. Our tax identification number is 91-1214158.

For more information, please speak to your financial advisor or lawyer, or call Washington Toxics Coalition at 206-632-1545 ext. 15. ■



Raise Money for WTC When you Shop at PCC

We'd like to thank all of our members who have participated in the PCC program. Sending your receipts to us, rather than your recycling bin, has resulted in \$800 of income for WTC this year. We're off to a great start!

We encourage all of our members who shop at PCC to take advantage of this simple program. It's easy — save your receipts each time you shop at PCC. When you have a bundle, send them to WTC. We will turn them in and receive 1% of the pre-tax total in return.

Receipts should be mailed to Washington Toxics Coalition, 4649 Sunnyside Avenue North, Suite 540, Seattle, WA 98103. ■

Join the Advocates Circle

As a member of the Washington Toxics Coalition, you know how important our work is and how effective we have become in working to make Washington a cleaner and safer place to live.

We would like to provide you with an important opportunity to maximize your impact in helping WTC by joining our **Advocates Circle**.

The Advocates Circle is our program for donors who would like to make a direct contribution to WTC on a monthly basis. Joining the Advocates Circle is simple. All you have to do is fill out the form below and return it to WTC. You decide what giving level works best for you, and WTC will automatically deduct your donation on the 1st or 15th day of each month.

This simplified form of giving means you will no longer receive annual renewal reminders. This will save WTC valuable resources and you will receive less mail.

The Advocates Circles provides us with the funds we need to make a difference on the issues that you care about. So please consider becoming a member of the Advocates Circle.

If you have questions or would like to sign up please contact Lori Mudge at 206-632-1545 ext. 15 or lmudge@watoxics.org.

Thank you. ■

Creative Ways to Support WTC

Save the Date

Our fourth annual
Auction for Action: Annual Celebration and Dinner

Will be held at the beautiful Shilshole Bay Beach Club in Seattle on
Wednesday, October 20, 2004.

Please mark your calendar and plan to join us for an evening of breathtaking views; delectable organic cuisine, wine, and beer; a delicious oyster bar; a lively and eclectic auction; great music; superb company; and a short, yet inspiring program.

We look forward to seeing you there!

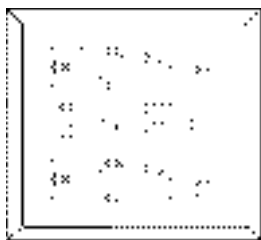
Invitations to this event will be mailed this summer. If you would like to pre-register, contact Lori Mudge at 206-632-1545 ext. 15. Tickets are \$75.

Interested in being involved in this fabulous event? We have a number of opportunities for you!

- ❖ Become a Table Captain. Bring together your friends, family, or colleagues for a fun evening out, support WTC, and have a great time in the process!
- ❖ Involved with an eco-friendly business? Consider becoming an event sponsor. We have a full range of sponsorships available, each with excellent perks. Help us throw a wonderful event and enhance your business in the process.
- ❖ Donate to our live or silent auctions. Do you own a vacation home, cabin, or time-share? Are you an artist, body worker, or gardener? Are you able to guide a trip, teach a class, cater a meal, or offer another unique service? Please consider offering your getaway, art, skills, or services to our auction as a tax-deductible donation.

To learn more about these opportunities, please contact Lori Mudge by phone at 206-632-1545 ext. 15 or by e-mail at lmudge@watoxics.org.





Home Safe Home

All Hands Off the Deck: Preventing Exposure to Arsenic from Treated Wood

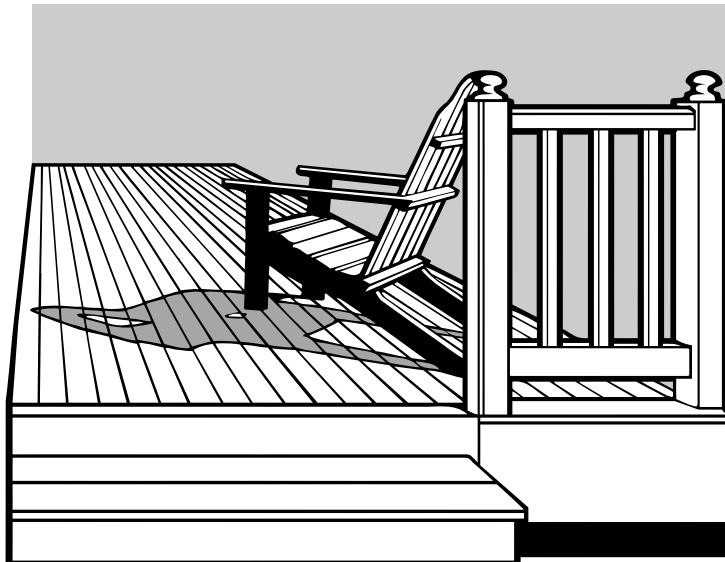
Philip Dickey

Been to the lumberyard lately? If you have looked for pressure-treated wood this year you may have noticed some changes. As of January 1, 2004, the most popular pressure-treated wood product, CCA (chromated copper arsenate), is no longer allowed to be used in home play-structures, decks, picnic tables, landscaping timbers, residential fencing, patios, and walkways/boardwalks. You can still buy pressure-treated wood, but the kinds available have changed.

On February 12, 2002, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency released a bombshell. They announced a “voluntary decision by industry to move consumer use of treated lumber products away from a variety of pressure-treated wood that contains arsenic.” On the surface, the announcement was astounding. Behind the scenes, however, it could perhaps have been foreseen. Arsenic-treated wood was getting a lot of bad press. A series of academic studies and reports from public-interest organizations were focusing attention on soil contamination and children’s exposure to arsenic. Rumor had it that EPA was working on a risk assessment that would not look good for industry. Before the risk assessment was released, however, EPA announced the phaseout.

Although EPA touted the health benefits of moving away from arsenic-treated wood — “today’s action will ensure that future exposures to arsenic are minimized in residential settings” — they refused to call the wood unsafe and did not recommend removal or replacement of CCA-treated structures. They did, however, suggest that coating structures to block arsenic transfer might be beneficial.

For the concerned parent, the EPA’s announcement raises two questions: 1) are the new products safer, and 2) what should I do if I already have a play structure, deck, furniture, fence, or other structure made of CCA? As is often the case, the answers are neither completely clear nor completely simple.



If the structure is large and replacing it would be too difficult or expensive, you might consider coating it — or at least the accessible parts — with a product to contain the arsenic.

The “New” Treated Wood

The treated wood that is replacing CCA uses a combination of copper with other preservatives. Ammoniacal Copper Quat (ACQ) combines copper with quaternary ammonium chlorides (known as quats). Copper Azole (CA) combines an azole fungicide such as propiconazole with the copper. Are they safer than the arsenic-based treatments? Copper is definitely much less toxic to humans than arsenic is. Less is known about the quats and the azole portions, especially as a pressure treatment. Nonetheless, most people agree that the move to copper is a good idea. The only caveat is that copper is actually more toxic to fish and other aquatic animals than arsenic. So, for structures built near or over water, copper is not the best choice.

Reducing Arsenic Exposure from Existing Structures

If you already have arsenic-treated wood in a deck or other structure, what should you do? You have a number of choices, depending on what the structure is and whether or not children will be using it.

• Rip It Out and Replace (or not)

This is clearly the most drastic measure. It makes the most sense if you have young children who will play on the structure and who are of an age

where they will be putting their fingers in their mouths and ingesting some arsenic. It also makes sense for small structures that are used frequently and are easily replaced.

• **Seal In the Arsenic, or at Least Try To**

If the structure is large and replacing it would be too difficult or expensive, you might consider coating it — or at least the accessible parts — with a product to contain the arsenic and prevent transfer to people's hands (and feet). A good idea in principle, sealing is limited in practice by the fact that we don't know much about what products are most effective. A good sealer would effectively contain the arsenic and would hold up for years under a variety of weather and wear conditions.

To date there is little information at all on which products contain arsenic most effectively. The few tests that have been done don't show much difference in effectiveness right after applications, but tests have not measured arsenic sealing over time under realistic conditions. So far, however, it appears that sealing with any product is better than not sealing at all.

There is some information available on how well various paints and deck stains hold up over time. Studies tend to show that:

1. The more opaque a coating, the longer it will hold up against sunlight.
2. Film-forming coatings (paints and opaque stains) may fail by chipping or cracking, especially on horizontal surfaces such as decks.

Given these two facts, penetrating semi-transparent stains may offer the best combination of qualities for coating horizontal surfaces.

Then there's the choice of water-based or oil-based. Traditional wisdom says that oil-based products are better, but water-based products are improving all the time and some water-based products have fared well in *Consumer Reports* testing.

Finally, how often do you need to recoat? This is the \$64,000 question. Answers seem to range from every six months to about every two years. In practice, it will depend on weather conditions, use of the structure, and which product was chosen. Visual appearance can be a guide to how the sealer is holding up. If you want more quantitative information, you'll have to take wipe samples and have them analyzed by a lab.

Another possibility is to use one of the products advertised on the Internet for containing arsenic-treated wood. These products are likely to require several coats and will completely hide the wood. We don't yet know how long they last.

• **Leave the Structure Alone, Change Your Use of It**

This option might make sense if you have a fairly new deck that you don't want to remove and if it is unlikely that children will be using it. If you don't want to go to the trouble of coating the deck every year or two, you'll have to take other precautions if you want to minimize arsenic exposure. For example, don't put food directly on treated wood. If you touch treated wood more than casually, wash your hands afterwards, especially before eating. If you have treated-wood decking, don't walk on it with bare feet. Install a high quality doormat at all outside doors and, better yet, take off your shoes before going inside.

A number of studies are planned or in progress that may help fill out our understanding of this subject. Until then, if you want to coat existing treated wood, I'd suggest looking at old issues of *Consumer Reports* at your local library (see Resources below). ■

Resources

Consumer Reports articles on deck treatments

- Consumers Union, 1997. Some popular deck treatments aren't holding up. *Consumer Reports* (May 1997): 7.
- Consumers Union, 1998. All decked out. *Consumer Reports* (June 1998): 32-34.
- Consumers Union, 2001a. Choosing a house paint or deck treatment for the long haul. *Consumer Reports* (June 2001): 44-46.
- Consumers Union, 2001b. House stains with staying power. *Consumer Reports* (October 2001): 50-51.
- Consumers Union, 2002. Product Updates: Deck treatments, house paints. *Consumer Reports* (June 2002): 47-49.

Encapsulgard coating for pressure-treated

wood. See details at www.hytechsales.com/encapsulation.html. (Note: we have not evaluated this product. This listing is for informational purposes and not an endorsement or a recommendation.)

Home Safe Home Fact Sheet: Paints and Wood

Preservatives. Print copy available for \$1.50 each (plus shipping and handling) or view condensed version at http://www.watoxics.org/pages/root.aspx?name=PUB_PAINTS.

Point of View

Motherhood, Breastfeeding, Citizen Activism

Beth Doglio

When I was nine months pregnant, Washington Toxics Coalition staffers Angela Storey and Brandie Smith asked me to help wage a toxics related campaign in the city of Olympia. As a long-time contributor and supporter of WTC, I agreed, although I wondered how I would manage between breastfeeding sessions and changing diapers. Now a stay-at-home mom of four-month-old baby boy Aspen, I've been busy not just breastfeeding and changing diapers, but as an active member of the Healthy Olympia Task Force. This active group of local citizens comprised of health professionals, Evergreen faculty members and students, and state and federal workers, spurred on by two dynamic WTC organizers (Angela and Brandie) was created in January of this year. In this short time, we have worked to convince the Olympia City Council to pass an integrated pest management and environmental purchasing policy, assisted WTC organizers with state legislative issues, and hosted a showing of the film "Blue Vinyl" that attracted 110 people.

As a parent there is nothing more that I want than to have healthy, happy children. Increasingly, studies point to potential health problems related to exposure to high levels of toxic chemicals. My little Aspen is so vulnerable at a mere 14 pounds. The thought of having exposed him to toxic chemicals while *in utero* and now while breastfeeding is frankly quite unnerving, unnerving enough that I strap Aspen on and go talk with city council members, state legislators and others in my community. I believe it is imperative that individuals, corporations and public governing bodies take action to reduce exposure.

That's why we are asking the Olympia City Council to consider passing an integrated pest management and environmental purchasing policy. We have met with city council members and city staff members encouraging our local government to 1) use their purchasing power to increase the market for safer alternatives, 2) be a model for the community, and 3) create momentum to move the state

forward. Currently our Public Works Department is reviewing our model policy and will report back to the Land Use and Environment Council Committee in May. We have found a very receptive council and staff and hope to have a policy in place by the end of the year.

In early March, while the state budget was in final negotiations, Aspen and I and other breastfeeding moms in the area spent time asking legislators to restore funding for the Department of Ecology's PBT program, which targets persistent toxic chemicals for phaseout. We breastfeeding moms, a rare scene in the halls of the legislature, contributed to success in the final budget that restored funding for this program. Additionally, several task force members

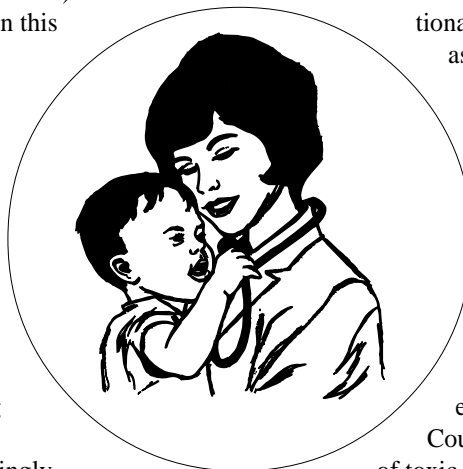
asked our local legislators to put pressure on the Department of Transportation to stop herbicide use in Thurston County. All three of them (Sen. Fraser, Rep. Hunt, and Rep. Romero) agreed to sign on to a letter to the Department asking for no spray.

On another front, the task force has been working to educate the general Thurston County population about the threat of toxic chemicals to our health. We

hosted a screening of the acclaimed documentary "Blue Vinyl." This movie takes an in-depth look into the PVC industry and the implications that it has on human health and the environment. This evening included a brief discussion after the movie about the work of the local task force to eliminate toxic products. Many attendees were interested in learning more and getting involved in this important work. We will have a general-interest meeting on May 2 to engage more citizens in our task force.

Breastfeeding and activism really can work together. Because our children are so vulnerable, our voices when raised are among the most effective in the struggle to reduce toxic chemicals in our environment. ■

Beth Doglio is a work-at-home, citizen-activist mom. She is the former director of development for Audubon Washington.



We breastfeeding moms, a rare scene in the halls of the legislature, contributed to success in the final budget that restored funding for this program.

Washington Toxics Coalition protects public health and the environment by eliminating toxic pollution. WTC promotes alternatives, advocates policies, empowers communities, and educates people to create a healthy environment.

Clean Water for Salmon

This Campaign seeks to phase out the use of pesticides that impact salmon and other species. We keep pressure on state and federal agencies for strong actions to protect salmon, seek pesticide phaseout policies by city and county governments, and watchdog the EPA to ensure that they comply with the Endangered Species Act.

Healthy Schools

The goals of the Healthy Schools project are to eliminate the use of highly hazardous pesticides in Washington's schools and to institutionalize school pest management practices that focus on prevention of pest problems. We accomplish this by working with community members to pass and implement school district policies to replace toxic pesticides.

Home Safe Home

The Home Safe Home program works to reduce the use of hazardous materials in household products and to reduce the purchase of toxic pesticides and chemicals by consumers. We publish informative fact sheets, perform educational presentations, maintain a fact-filled website, and have a toll-free hotline to answer questions and promote alternatives.

Toxic-Free Legacy

The goal of the Toxic Free Legacy campaign is to phase out and clean up persistent toxic chemicals (PBTs) such as mercury, PBDEs, dioxin, and PCBs. We do this by working for strong policies to phase out these chemicals, reducing major pollution sources, and pushing for cutting-edge government and business procurement policies and practices that establish strong markets for non-polluting products.

Match Making

Would you like to double or even triple your contribution to WTC? Even in today's economy, most large corporations and many small businesses maintain a matching-gift program. In 2003 we received nearly \$5,000 in corporate matching gifts!

It's a simple process: the donor fills out a form and includes it with the donation or sends it in separately. Upon receipt of the gift, we complete the form and return it to the corporation. In a few weeks we receive a check matching your gift. Ask your human resources director for information about the program where you work. It's never too late to start doubling your contributions to the Washington Toxics Coalition. Thank you! ■

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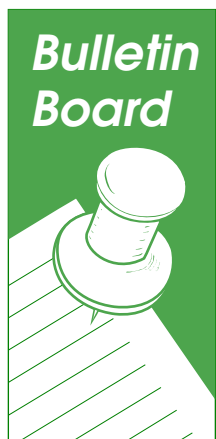
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Welcome to Maria Mergel

Greetings! My name is Maria Mergel, and I joined WTC in February as the new information services coordinator. I grew up in Tokyo, Japan, and came to Seattle three years ago by way of northern Ohio (I much prefer the Douglas firs to skyscrapers and cornfields!). I am very interested in organic gardening and completed a Certificate in ornamental horticulture earlier this year. I also hold a B.A. in environmental studies from Oberlin College and hope to eventually pursue a degree in botany or plant ecology.

My involvement in toxics issues began last year when I started working as an environmental education specialist for King County's Household Hazardous Wastemobile. I continue to work for the Wastemobile, where I talk to visitors about how to reduce their use of household hazardous materials, particularly oil-based paint products, pesticides, and strong cleaners. I am very pleased to be able to learn more about household toxics and help others to seek out safer alternatives. Please e-mail info@watoxics.org or call 800-844-SAFE if you have any questions! ■

Announcing a new WTC report:

A Lesson in Prevention: Measuring Pesticide Use in Washington Schools

See page 4 for details.

Farewell to Doug Collins

Doug joined the WTC staff in early 2002, and worked as our Information Services Coordinator until February of this year.

Doug is planning to enter a Ph.D. program this fall, and wanted to reduce his work hours in preparation. He is continuing to work part time for the City of Seattle's Natural Lawn and Garden Hotline, which is managed by Seattle Tilth. Their office is in the Good Shepherd Center with us, so we still get the privilege of seeing him.

Doug very quickly grew into the sometimes challenging tasks of fielding the myriad of questions that come in on our Toxics Hotline. He was a valued and dedicated member of the staff, and his easy-going style, sense of humor, and quality work will be missed.

We wish Doug the very best in his future endeavors, and are confident that he will be an exemplary student as he continues his education. ■

Thanks to Dave Coffman

WTC's longest-serving member of the board of directors has decided to step down from the board.

Dave Coffman, an instructor at Pierce College, joined the board in 1982 and has served consistently since then. Dave is a longtime community activist, and in the past worked for the forest service and has served on the board of the Mount Baker Watershed Protection Association.

We sincerely wish Dave the best, and thank him for his many years of dedication to WTC and the cause of a healthier environment. ■

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