

WASHINGTON
TOXICS
COALITION

Alternatives



2007 Legislative Session Off to a Fast Start

Ivy Sager-Rosenthal

The 2007 legislative session has started in earnest, and WTC is working hard to win its top legislative priorities. This year, our focus is on passing legislation to eliminate toxic flame retardants (PBDEs) in consumer products and increasing funding in the state budget for Washington State University’s program to promote organic and sustainable agriculture.

Bills to Eliminate Toxic Flame Retardants Off To A Fast Start

The Legislature has barely begun, and the bills to eliminate PBDEs are already off to their best start yet! SHB 1024 and SSB 5034 have already passed out of their respective policy committees and are awaiting votes by the full Legislature. The bills are sponsored by Rep. Ross Hunter (D-Medina) in the House and Sen. Debbie Regala (D-Tacoma) in the Senate.

Researchers increasingly are finding PBDEs in our bodies, homes, wildlife, and environment. These chemicals, used primarily in computers, televisions, residential mattresses, and upholstered furniture, are highly toxic and have been linked to damaging health effects including learning, behavior, and memory problems, liver toxicity, cancer, and thyroid and reproductive problems. Children are most at risk because studies suggest they receive up to 300 times greater exposure to PBDEs relative to adults, primarily from breast milk and inadvertent dust ingestion.

This will be the third year that WTC is supporting PBDE legislation. This year’s legislation bans the penta and octa forms of PBDEs in consumer products, with certain exceptions, and bans the deca form of PBDEs in residential mattresses. Both bans are effective January 1, 2008. The legislation also bans the deca form of PBDEs in televisions, computers, and residential furniture beginning January 1, 2011, provided the departments of Ecology and Health and a committee of fire-safety experts determine there are safer alternatives to deca



Proudly posing in front of the state capitol building are some of the people who took time out of their busy day to meet with their legislators and press for the elimination of toxic flame retardants: front row (left to right) Leanne Wlaznak, Becky Lyons, Karen Bowman, Heather Moore, Nancy Dickeman, Alia Griffing; back row: Laura Hart, Gail Chira, Thomas Griffith, Andrea Keeley, Jim Dawson.

that meet fire safety standards.

For the last two years, the legislation has come excruciatingly close to passing. Last year, even though the House passed a watered-down version of the bill, the bill was eventually strengthened in the Senate committee. Yet, despite having enough votes to pass in the Senate, the Senate failed to bring the bill up for a vote because out-of-state chemical manufacturers spread enough misinformation to convince a few key senators to not let the bill come up for a vote.

This year the bill has the most support it has ever had and is moving quickly. Already, 53 House legislators and 21 senators have signed on in support. The bill has the full backing of the

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First Person

Europe Leads the Way for Progress Here

Gregg Small

On December 13, the European Union passed the toughest law in the world designed for protecting public health and the environment. The new law, called REACH (Registration, Evaluation, and Authorization of Chemicals), passed after nearly a decade of fierce debate and despite the aggressive opposition of the Bush administration and the chemical industry.

Passage of this new policy is a watershed moment in the global campaign to protect our health and the environment. It provides us with enormous hope for change here in Washington and across the United States.

What does REACH do, and why does it matter to us? At the most basic level, REACH does what should be common sense when it comes to public policy for the use of chemicals. In short, it requires chemical manufacturers to test their products for health and environmental impacts; establishes a government agency to review the information; and empowers the agency to authorize chemicals of concern, including placing restrictions or banning chemicals it determines are too hazardous. It will also ban some dangerous chemicals if safer substitutes are available.

As common sense as this approach is, it represents a dramatic shift in chemicals policy and stands in marked contrast to the current policies in the United States and here in Washington. In fact, our current federal policy suffers from three fundamental flaws outlined in a recent report commissioned by the California State Legislature and authored by Mike Wilson with the University of California. The report, titled *Green Chemistry in California: A Framework for Leadership in Chemicals Policy and Innovation*, cited these three major flaws with current U.S. policy:

- **Data Gap.** We know very little about the health and environmental impacts of the more than 80,000 chemicals on the market in the United States because chemical manufacturers are not

required to submit the information.

- **Safety Gap.** Because current law is so weak, the EPA has regulated only five classes of chemicals in the past 30 years, despite a growing mountain of evidence linking a wide variety of chemicals to cancer, developmental disorders, and a host of other health impacts.
- **Technology Gap.** Government support for green chemistry and other innovations designed to reduce toxic chemicals in the United States lags far behind those of many other countries, leaving us behind the curve in researching and developing the safer products that consumers want.

Why does this matter to us in Washington and throughout the United States? First, Europe's new law will provide people across the globe with more information about the chemicals that are used in our products and manufacturing processes. Given the

data gap that currently exists, this will represent a significant step forward in public understanding of the health and environmental impacts of chemicals.

Second, because the new law requires manufacturers to restrict or phase out their use of certain

highly toxic chemicals if they want to sell their products in the European Union, it will likely result in changes to the chemicals used in countless consumer products. This will likely lead to changes in the chemicals used in the products that many major corporations sell into the U.S. market as well.

Finally, it will spur discussion in the United States and in Washington about the current broken system that exists for protecting our health and environment from toxic chemicals and the solutions that we need.

WTC is working closely with our allies in Washington and across the globe to develop and campaign for chemical policy reform that will truly protect us. Europe has taken an important first step. We're working hard to make Washington a leader in taking the next big step forward. I look forward to working with you to make it happen. ■

Europe has taken an important first step. We're working hard to make Washington a leader in taking the next big step forward.

Pesticides

Poisons in the Wind

Farm Worker Community Members Test the Air for Chlorpyrifos

By Carol Dansereau, Executive Director, Farm Worker Pesticide Project

2006 was an exciting year for the Farm Worker Pesticide Project, a non-profit organization with offices in Seattle and Yakima. Frustrated by invisibility and the powerlessness that comes with it, we decided to find out for ourselves what is in the air that farm worker community members are breathing. State and federal agencies have refused to test the air even as they argue that there is insufficient evidence to warrant better protecting people against agricultural pesticides. So we obtained air monitoring equipment, training and other assistance from the national organization Pesticide Action Network (PAN). And during the peak spray season, farm worker community members tested the air in their yards for the organophosphate pesticide chlorpyrifos at two homes in the northern Yakima Valley.

What we found was very disturbing. Chlorpyrifos was present in the air every day at each of our two test locations. The concentrations exceeded so-called "acceptable" levels (the Reference Exposure Level or REL in the chart at right) for young children on many different days. Evidence is strong that children and others risk neurological damage and other health effects even at levels below the REL, but EPA management has opted to ignore that evidence. The agency finalized its reauthorization of chlorpyrifos for agricultural use this year despite strong objections from its own scientists regarding its disregard for science.

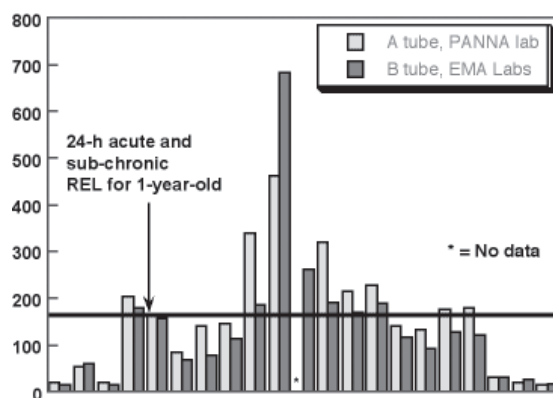
We shared our test results in a major report released in December: *Poisons on the Wind: Community Air Monitoring for Chlorpyrifos in the Yakima Valley*, which can be downloaded at the Farm Worker Pesticide Project website: www.fwpp.org. Even as we released the report, Columbia University published a new study driving home the risks of chlorpyrifos exposures. According to the school's news release on December 4th, "Children who were exposed prenatally to the insecticide chlorpyrifos had significantly poorer mental and motor development by three years of age and increased risk for behavior problems." The children in that study lived in New York City and were exposed to chlorpyrifos from household products that their mothers inhaled while pregnant.

EPA banned chlorpyrifos in household products several years ago saying "(i)t is clear the time has come to take action to protect our children from exposure to this chemical." But farm worker children and others in agricultural areas were not afforded that protection. Over 226,000 pounds of chlorpyrifos were intentionally air blasted directly into the environment near their homes, daycares, and schools in 2005 in Washington state alone. There is an urgent need for attention to this long overlooked major environmental injustice in Washington state, an injustice repeated elsewhere in the nation as well.

There are *people* out there in the fields and orchards and living next door to them. They have a right to breathe clean air, a right that is being abridged. Our monitoring focused on only one pesticide, chlorpyrifos, while farm workers, their families, and others in agricultural areas are actually exposed to a wide array of pesticides over the course of a year. We intend to do some additional monitoring projects in 2007, making the results public to shine a light on this long-ignored problem.

But we really need the state to gather more comprehensive data on a wide range of pesticides. California state agencies have monitored the air in that state, and the results are compelling. Based on air monitoring results, for example, state scientists in California concluded that 50% of people in the general population near monitors testing for MITC were inhaling it at levels exceeding reference exposure levels. (MITC is a breakdown product for metam sodium, which is used in large quantities on potatoes in Washington state.) Fifty percent of the children in the general population were inhaling chlorpyrifos (the pesticide we tested for here) at concentrations exceeding reference doses. The scientists warned that farm workers and their families likely face greater risks than members of

Chlorpyrifos in Air in Cowiche, Yakima Valley
April 3–23, 2006



Measured air concentrations of chlorpyrifos is displayed in nanograms per cubic meter of air (ng/m³).

Continued on page 4, see *IN THE WIND*

WTC News

You are invited to join the staff and board of Washington Toxics Coalition for “Coffee with the Coalition.”

Thursday, February 22, 8:15 a.m. to 9:15 a.m.

Where:

**Good Shepherd Center, 4649 Sunnyside Avenue N,
Room 202, Seattle, WA 98103**

Please join us for a 2007 legislative update, coffee, tea, a light breakfast, and an opportunity to meet our staff. This informal gathering will also provide you an opportunity to tour our offices, ask us questions, and hear about opportunities for getting involved and strengthening our work.



RSVP by Tuesday, February 20 to Kristin Tremoulet at ktremoulet@watoxics.org or 206-632-1545 ext. 121.

IN THE WIND, from page 3

the general population because of where they live and work.

Washington state has opted to fly blind, not collecting basic information on what is in the air, despite the warning signs from California and from other data. Working with many different allies, including the Washington Toxics Coalition, FWPP is seeking legislation in 2007 to establish a state air monitoring program for agricultural pesticides. We are also calling for an Alternatives Assessment pulling together information on pesticides that pose the greatest risk to farm workers and others in agricultural areas. The Assessment will identify safer alternatives to these, barriers to their use, and policies that could help more growers transition to safer methods of growing food. We seek to jumpstart a discussion regarding policies and

Additional FastFacts Available on Website!

Maria Mergel

Last fall we added a new section to our website called *FastFacts* that provides short answers to frequently asked questions about safer alternatives to products that contain toxic chemicals. We started out with questions related to pest control and have now added fifty new questions on the following topics: persistent toxic chemicals, cosmetics and personal-care products, cleaning products, art and hobby materials, human health and toxicology, and disposal of hazardous household products. If you've been thinking of questions to ask us, it's likely that you'll find your answers here! And even if you don't have a list, please take a look. You can find our *FastFacts* in the Healthy Homes and Gardens section of our website (www.watoxics.org). We'll be adding new sections regularly, so please check back often!

A sampler of our *FastFacts* questions:

- ❖ Are “natural” cleaning products safer for me or the environment?
- ❖ Should I stop using my Teflon cookware?
- ❖ What consumer products contain PBDEs (toxic flame retardants)? How do I find safer alternatives?
- ❖ Which plastic food containers are safest?
- ❖ What can I do with unwanted electronic items such as televisions, computers, printers, and cell phones?
- ❖ What is the safest way to get rid of moss growing on my roof?
- ❖ Should I use a disinfectant to clean the kitchen and bathroom? ■

programs which can help reduce reliance on the pesticides that most threaten the health of workers and others in agricultural areas.

We are also working to end the environmental injustices associated with agricultural pesticide use by advocating notification to workers and neighbors prior to applications; no spray buffer zones around daycares, schools and unprotected workers; improved enforcement of regulations related to drift; phaseout timelines for the most problematic pesticides; and other measures. For more information, contact us at our Seattle office (206-729-0498; cdansereaufwpp@earthlink.net). ■

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departments of Ecology and Health, and, as part of her initiative to clean up and restore Puget Sound to health, Gov. Gregoire has made phasing out PBDEs one of her top priorities for the 2007 legislative session.

The bill also is supported by several major fire-fighting organizations in the state. The Washington State Association of Fire Chiefs, Washington State Council of Firefighters, and the Washington State Firefighters Association have all signed on in support. The bill also has support from major health and environmental groups in the state, including the Washington State Nurses Association, Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility, the Washington Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, and People for Puget Sound.

Out-of-state makers of PBDEs lead the opposition to the bill. Not surprising, they are already up to their usual tricks this session, spreading misinformation and employing very aggressive lobbying tactics. A recent *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* article exposed one of the bill's opponents as working for the chemical manufacturers even though he represented himself in Olympia as only working for a fire-fighting organization. The same article also revealed that the chemical industry spent more than \$107,000 in lobbying to defeat the bill last year.

WTC and its allies will not be deterred this session! On January 24, 2007, WTC partnered with Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility and other members of the Toxic-Free Legacy Coalition to hold the first Lobby Day of the session. WTC members and other members of the Coalition met with more than 20 legislators and delivered to every legislative office a letter signed by over 275 healthcare professionals supporting the PBDE bill.

Everyone is optimistic that 2007 will be the year Washington takes a giant step in protecting children's health by phasing out PBDEs.

More Funding Needed to Support Organic and**Sustainable Agriculture**

Last year, WTC and its allies in the Washington Sustainable Food and Farming Network claimed victory in securing funding for Washington State University's Biologically Intensive and Organic Agriculture (BIOAg) Program. This legislative session we are again working with WSU, seeking to increase funding for the program by an additional \$800,000 over the next two years.

WSU's BIOAg program supports and promotes organic and sustainable agriculture through research and outreach to growers to help them reduce costs, protect the environment, develop 'value-added' products, and produce food that responds to public

demand for locally grown and organic products. The program also has established the nation's first organic farming major at a four-year university. This degree program will help foster interest in and promote organic farming far into the future.

The additional \$800,000 in funding would nearly double the amount of funding available for research and support grants, increase the number of demonstration farms, and build the organic major by supporting

additional curriculum development and student projects.

Gov. Gregoire has already pledged \$400,000 toward the program in her budget proposal. It is now up to the Legislature to pass the final budget for the program. WTC and its allies are working hard with the program's legislative champion Rep. Kelli Linville (D-Bellingham) to ensure the program's funding is increased in the final budget.

How You Can Help

For more information on how you can get involved in our campaigns to phase out PBDEs and support organic and sustainable agriculture, contact Jim Dawson at 206-632-1545 ext. 120 or jdawson@watoxics.org.

For more information on the PBDE bill go to www.watoxics.org/issues/pbdes/legislative-update.

For more information on WSU's BIOAg program, go to www.watoxics.org/sustainable-agriculture. ■



Gregg Nye Photography

Rep. Ross Hunter and Sen. Debbie Regalla were awarded the 2006 Legislators of the Year Award at the WTC Auction for Action for their efforts to pass a bill to eliminate PBDEs (WTC Executive Director Gregg Small, left, presented the awards). Both are continuing their efforts in the 2007 legislative session.

Donor and Foundation Recognition

Our many critical victories wouldn't be possible without the support of our donors. This list acknowledges individuals and businesses that made donations of \$100 or more to WTC in 2006.

We truly appreciate all of our members and wish we could list everyone here. Unfortunately space limitations prohibit it.

Thank you to all of our supporters!

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Please see page 11 for a list of our wonderful volunteers and interns who helped make 2006 such a great and productive year for WTC and the environment and health of Washington.

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Home Safe Home

Plastic Water Bottles: Portability over Potability?

Philip Dickey



Bottled water is hot! These days you can't go anywhere without seeing people gulping water from plastic bottles. Sales of bottled water have tripled in the United States in the past 10 years, now reaching 13 billion liters per year.¹ That's pretty good for a product that costs from 240 to 10,000 times as much per serving as ordinary tap water, especially since somewhere between 25 and 40% of the bottled water being sold actually IS ordinary tap water.¹ In addition to water purchased by the bottle, it's also extremely popular to carry water (bottled or tap) in one of the various trendy plastic "sports" bottles.

Some recent reports have raised health concerns about toxic chemicals migrating from plastic bottles to the drinks inside. These days, information available on the Internet and elsewhere comes from a variety of sources, including the industries that make plastic and bottle water, as well as scientists and organizations with widely differing points of view. Unfortunately, science can only go so far towards answering our questions before the subtle art of interpretation takes over.

Know your Plastics

Although almost all plastics are made from petroleum, the risks of production, use, and disposal vary greatly, so you need to know what kind of plastic you are using. The commonly used recycling symbols are a reasonably good way to find out.

According to the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy's *Smart Plastics Guide*, the better choices for water bottles and food use are PET (#1), HDPE (#2), LDPE (#4), and polypropylene (#5). They suggest avoiding PVC (#3), polystyrene (#6), and polycarbonate (#7). For more information, the guide is available at <http://www.environmentalobservatory.org/library.cfm?refid=77083>.

Let's look in more detail at the two types of plastic that are mainly used as beverage containers.

Polyethylene terephthalate (PET)

These are the containers that bottled water (and most soft drinks and many juices) usually comes in. They are clear and lightweight and should have recycling symbol #1 on the bottom. There are generally few concerns with using PET as drink bottles. The contaminants I have seen discussed are antimony, a toxic heavy metal that is often used as a

catalyst in the manufacturing process, and DEHA, a plasticizer.

A recent study at the University of Heidelberg² found elevated levels of antimony in commercially bottled water and implicated the bottles as the source, since the contamination increased the longer the water remained in the bottles. Measured levels of antimony averaged 156 ppt (parts per trillion) in 12 brands of bottled natural water from Canada, as compared to 2.2 ppt in groundwater from Ontario and 8.2 ppt in natural water from Ontario bottled in polypropylene rather than PET. After 37 days of storage in refrigerated PET bottles, the water contained 50 ppt antimony, and after six months at room temperature 566 ppt. Antimony levels in bottled European waters were somewhat higher. (Note: The maximum contaminant level (MCL) for antimony in drinking water is 6000 parts per trillion (ppt). This is the level that EPA considers to be safe for consumption over a lifetime.)

This study has been cited as both evidence of a problem and evidence of no problem. Clearly, antimony leached from the PET bottles, and the longer the water remained in the bottles the more antimony it contained. The measured antimony levels were generally below 10% of EPA's safety standard. I do drink beverages packaged in PET bottles when it's convenient or necessary without worrying too much about antimony. Avoid keeping water in PET for long-term storage, however, and use glass bottles for water that you want to keep cold in the refrigerator for consumption at home. Certainly, it would be better if bottled water did not contain antimony or other contaminants at levels higher than natural sources. This study reinforces the need for cleaner plastics uncontaminated by various chemicals used as additives. Perhaps new research on bioplastics made from corn, sugar, and other materials will eventually be a better answer.

Another study bandied about the Internet is a paper by a University of Idaho masters degree student presented at a meeting of the Society for Risk Analysis.³ The author measured contaminants in water stored in PET bottles under extreme conditions of use. Four compounds were identified, of which DEHA (di(2-ethylhexyl) adipate) has generated the most interest because there is some evidence that DEHA may cause cancer. Since DEHA is widely used in various types of plastics but apparently not PET, the DEHA may not have

come from the bottles. The study has not been peer reviewed and its conclusions are possibly contradicted by a report (also not peer reviewed) from the Swiss Federal Laboratories for Materials Testing and Research, which found levels of DEHA in PET-bottled water to be essentially the same as in water from glass bottles.⁴

Polycarbonate

Polycarbonate is a plastic used in many types of bottles (including baby bottles) and some “sippy” cups used by children. It is also used in the lining of some metal food cans and in dental sealants.

Polycarbonate (the most common of several plastics designated by recycling symbol #7) is manufactured from bisphenol A (BPA). Unfortunately, the bond connecting BPA molecules in the plastic breaks down, especially in the presence of heat or acidic or basic foods or beverages, resulting in contamination of the contents. Body burden testing confirms widespread (95%) findings of BPA in human urine, indicating ongoing exposure. None of this is controversial. What is hotly contested is whether current exposure levels are of concern. Industry contends that levels of BPA found in food or water are safe because they are less than the current (actually very out of date) regulatory safety standards. According to researcher Frederick vom Saal, however, BPA is a somewhat unusual chemical that actually can be more dangerous at lower doses than at larger ones. He also discounts the results of many industry studies, noting that 90% of 104 government-funded studies report significant effects at doses below the supposed safe level, while none of the 11 industry-funded studies report effects that these same doses.⁵ He goes further to conclude that “the rate of leaching from commonly used BPA-containing products (the lining of tin cans and polycarbonate food and beverage containers) is high enough to result in adverse effects in laboratory animals.”

Vom Saal’s concerns are the basis for widespread recommendations to avoid polycarbonate when possible in food contact. I agree with that precautionary stance because of the low-dose effects of BPA. Unfortunately, consumers can’t tell which cans might contain BPA. That needs to change. I can tell you that canned tomatoes are pretty welcome in Seattle in the winter.

Reusing Plastic Bottles

If you buy water in plastic bottles, it’s certainly tempting (and good waste prevention) to refill the bottles with tap water or water filtered at home and reuse them. Some have warned against this practice due to possible contamination with germs after multiple uses. This warning is worth considering,

given that many people, myself included, tend to refill the bottle and reuse it without washing it. With a small opening and a threaded top, plastic bottles are not the easiest items to get clean. My suggestion is to wash them carefully in hot soapy water after every few uses, including partially filling the bottle with it and shaking vigorously with the cap on. Limit the number of reuses to prevent the plastic from wearing or breaking down, and then recycle the bottle.

Recommendations

1. Whenever possible and when breakage is not a safety concern, use glass containers for water or food. Stainless steel water bottles are another option.
2. Avoid putting drinking water in containers made of polystyrene, polyvinyl chloride (PVC), or polycarbonate. (NOTE: The popular Nalgene™ line of bottles includes products made of polycarbonate, HDPE, LDPE, and polypropylene. Check catalogue or product specifications carefully to make sure you are getting the material you prefer.)
3. If you must use plastic bottles, choose PET, HDPE, LDPE, or polypropylene.
4. Do not store water or food in plastic containers indefinitely.
5. If you reuse water bottles, clean them thoroughly and limit the number of reuses before recycling.
6. Choose baby bottles made of tempered glass, polypropylene plastic, or polyethylene plastic, such as Evenflo glass or pastel bottles, Gerber opaque bottles, or Medela bottles.

Choose sippy cups made of polypropylene or polyethylene, such as Avent Magic Cup, First Years Take & Toss, Gerber Color Change, and Playtex Sipster.

For more information, see www.pollutioninpeople.org. ■

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Point of View

To Save Puget Sound We Must Eliminate Toxic Chemicals Now

Ivan Reiff

Puget Sound's marine life, including the orca, are indispensable as our children's and grandchildren's natural heritage. We should stop destroying this legacy by eliminating the use of toxic chemicals that are proven harmful.

As a local whale/wildlife tour operator I have a deep respect and strong appreciation for this beautiful area we live in, and for the wonderful animals we share it with. As vice-president of the Whale Watch Operators Association Northwest, I represent 28 local companies that accommodate nearly 500,000 wildlife enthusiasts each year. Some travel thousands of miles to visit the Pacific Northwest, while many others are local residents. The common thread being their desire to view and learn about the whales, porpoises, sea lions, harbor seals, salmon, and sea birds of greater Puget Sound.

Without a healthy Puget Sound, these wonderful animals, which so many of us consider icons of the Pacific Northwest, will cease to exist.

Unfortunately, the Sound and its wildlife are contaminated with toxic chemicals. One of the main culprits is toxic flame retardants, known as PBDEs (polybrominated biphenyl ethers), that are commonly used in consumer products such as televisions, furniture, and mattresses.

Recent scientific studies have found that PBDEs are so prevalent in Puget Sound that leading scientists have identified them as a major survival threat. Scientists expect flame retardants to overtake PCBs in the next 15-20 years as the most prevalent chemical found in Puget Sound orca whales. Levels of these chemicals are already 2-10 times higher in our orca whales than in other whales around the world.

However, it is not just the orca that are in trouble. Levels of flame retardant PBDEs in Puget Sound's harbor seals have doubled every four years since 1984. Researchers have also found PBDEs in Puget Sound rockfish, herring, English sole, and Chinook salmon.

Scientists around the world are concerned because PBDEs persist in the environment for long periods of time, build up in the food chain, and are toxic at very low levels. They have been linked to neurological, thyroid, and learning problems.

Fortunately, there is a solution. Gov. Gregoire has announced her Puget Sound Priorities for 2007. As part of her legislative plan, she recommends eliminating toxic PBDEs from consumer products when safer alternatives exist.

I applaud the governor's recommendation. It is a common-sense solution and one that is long overdue. For many of the products that contain toxic PBDEs, alternatives that will not compromise fire safety already exist. Many companies, including Dell, Hewlett-Packard, Panasonic, and IKEA have already stopped using these chemicals, while continuing to meet fire-safety standards. These companies demonstrate that toxic PBDEs have no place in our products.

Legislation has been proposed to eliminate toxic PBDEs from consumer products if alternatives that do not compromise fire safety are available. The prime sponsors of this legislation are Rep. Ross Hunter (D-48) and Sen. Debbie Regala (D-27),

and both the departments of Ecology and

Health support the legislation.

Puget Sound's marine life, including the orca, are indispensable as our children's and grandchildren's natural heritage. We should stop destroying this legacy by eliminating the use of toxic chemicals that are proven harmful. The Washington State Legislature must follow the governor's lead and pass legislation to eliminate toxic flame retardant PBDEs this session.

Every member of the Whale Watch Operators Association Northwest has signed on to a letter urging our state legislators to support a ban on toxic flame retardant PBDEs. I implore you to call or write your legislator to do the same. The health of our local environment, wildlife, and future depends on it.

There is no other option: Puget Sound must be protected. ■

Ivan Reiff is vice president of Whale Watch Operators Association Northwest and owner/captain of Western Prince Whale & Wildlife Tours.



Thanks to our Volunteers and Interns

Volunteers at Washington Toxics Coalition play an important role in our success. From providing support on our annual Auction for Action to staffing an information booth at a fair to data entry, every role provides more than just support. Your smiling faces and dedication to protecting public health and the environment from toxic chemicals is an inspiration to us.

We are honored to have had the opportunity to work with the following amazing individuals in 2006, who altogether contributed more than 2000 hours or valuable time! Thank you for all your wonderful help! Names in **boldface** indicate volunteers who contributed 20 hours or more of their time.

Volunteers

Jessie Alan
 Karina Aldredge
 Anne Angelou
 Juli Arns
 Kerri Bailey
 Rick Barrett
 Darcie Bigelow
 Ron Bigelow
 John Birnel
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 Leea Brady
 Scott Buesing
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 Linda Stein
 Meredith Stone
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 Ed Wayt
 Ryan Whitney
 Dara Woods-Calkins

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Danni Hughes
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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 with safer products and practices.

Home Safe Home

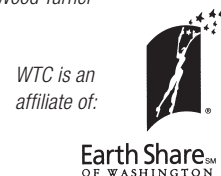
The Home Safe Home program works to reduce the use of hazardous materials in household products and to reduce the purchase of toxic pesticides and chemicals by consumers. We publish informative fact sheets, perform educational presentations, maintain a fact-filled website, and have a toll-free hotline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

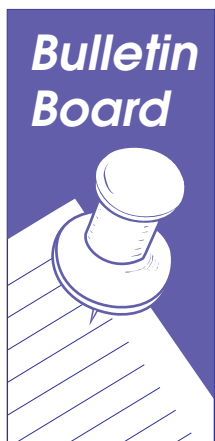
Toxic-Free Legacy

The goal of the Toxic Free Legacy campaign is to phase out and clean up persistent toxic chemicals 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.



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WTC Loses Two Staff Members

Jeff Cohn

In late 2006, long-time staff member Jeff Cohn left and is pursuing new interests. Jeff served as director of administration for fourteen years. Over time, Jeff's job grew to include administration, human resources, and information technology. He made sure the bills were paid, the donations deposited, the supplies ordered (including new equipment when needed), the taxes filed, the printer jams fixed, the new phone system was programmed, board meetings were organized, and much more.

Jeff was also the voice many of you heard if you were lucky enough to get a human instead of the voice-mail system if you phoned us. He was one of the few to sometimes still grab a ringing phone.

We wish Jeff the very best in his future endeavors.

Angela Storey

For the last four and a half years, if you wanted to stop pesticide use at the local level in Washington, Angela Storey has been your go-to person. As our pesticides organizer, Angela brought our community organizing on pesticide issues to a new level. She worked with parents and community members throughout Washington, helping them pass policies to stop the use of the most toxic pesticides and replace them with safer methods. Together with WTC members and activists, she helped reduce pesticides in schools, parks, on roadsides, and in lakes.

The activists that Angela worked with rave about her assistance, and say that she always made

them feel like they were the only community group she worked with. Those of us in the office already miss Angela's enthusiasm, infectious smile, and incredible commitment to helping community members make change on pesticides. We wish her the very best as she moves on to graduate school, and are confident that her passion for community activism will bring new life to the field of anthropology. ■

Are Contributions to WTC Tax Deductible?

In between New Year's and Ground Hog Day people turn their thoughts to taxes and begin gearing up for the April 15 deadline. In general, all contributions to Washington Toxics Coalition, including memberships, are 100% tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Exceptions to note: event tickets or auction items will be only partially deductible, if at all, depending on the relative value of the item and the donation. Your WTC receipt will specify how much is deductible. Some items such as gifted memberships, subscriptions, and other purchases are not tax deductible.

For specific information regarding your tax deductions, we recommend that you consult your personal accountant or the Internal Revenue Service. Their website at www.irs.gov offers a wealth of information.

If you need a duplicate receipt for any contribution, or a summary of your 2006 donations to the Toxics Coalition, contact us at 206-632-1545 ext. 110 or via e-mail at info@watoxics.org. ■

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