

## 1) Environmental Science & Technology

Policy News –March 7, 2007

### **States seek to ban most common flame retardant**

#### **Washington and Maine may end up battling it out to be the first state to ban the Deca form of PBDEs.**

Washington may become the first state to ban the most common form of polybrominated diphenyl ether (PBDE) flame retardants, Deca-BDE, which the U.S. EPA lists as a carcinogen. On the opposite side of the nation, Maine may not be far behind.

In Washington, proposed legislation would phase out the use of Deca-BDEs in computers and other consumer products by 2011. The bill was introduced in January, marking the third year that such a ban has been suggested, according to Robert Duff, director of the state's Office of Environmental Health Assessments, who says that it seems increasingly likely to pass.

The law would also make the state one of a handful that have banned Octa- and Penta-BDEs, also considered toxic. Deca-BDE replaced these and other discontinued PBDEs.

2) Policy News –March 7, 2007

### **Deca PBDEs not needed in TVs, Maine claims**

#### **A report by Maine's Department of Environmental Protection recommends that Deca-BDE be banned.**

Maine should ban the Deca polybrominated diphenyl ether (PBDE) flame retardant in televisions beginning in 2012, recommends a report (930KB PDF) by the state's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). "Televisions account for the majority of the use of the Deca flame retardant in the U.S.," explains John James of the Maine DEP. He notes that Sony (681KB PDF), Panasonic, and Philips already offer TVs that use alternatives to Deca.

In 2004, Maine passed legislation banning the more toxic Penta and Octa PBDEs and requiring that the heavier Deca formulation be banned in 2008 if safer alternatives were identified. Maine's DEP also recommends that any mattresses and upholstered furniture containing Deca be banned in 2008, although the formulation is not now known to be used in these products.

"...we propose a more immediate effective date of January 1, 2008 for the ban on the sale of mattresses and residential furniture that contain decaBDE."

3) California State Government website: This page updated May 9, 2006

## PBDEs in California



Polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs) are a class of fire retardants that have been used for several decades. Three main commercial grades of PBDEs have been used in foams in furniture and automobiles, in electronic printed circuit boards, in electronics casings, in carpet backing, and in upholstery. Over time, PBDEs slowly off-gas from these products. PBDEs accumulate in the body. In recent years, concerns have increased as concentrations have been found to be increasing in ecological and human samples. Potential exposure can occur through ingestion and inhalation. PBDEs may disrupt thyroid hormones, may cause developmental deficits, may act as a reproductive toxin, and may cause cancer. The ARB considers PBDEs to be a toxic air contaminant in California. Two of the main commercial grades of PBDEs have been banned from use by the California Legislature, effective June 1, 2006, and by the European Union.

### 4) California Environmental Protection Agency:

#### Executive Summary

The manufacture, distribution and processing of products containing pentabrominated diphenyl ether (pentaBDE) and octabrominated diphenyl ether (octaBDE) flame retardants will be prohibited in California as of June 1, 2006 (California Health and Safety Code Sections 108920 *et seq.*); only products manufactured after June 1, 2006, are subject to the prohibition. This prohibition was prompted by findings that exposures to polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs) are widespread, and may pose health risks. However, the manufacture, distribution and processing of products containing the most commonly used PBDE mixture, decabrominated diphenyl ether (decaBDE), has not been prohibited. PentaBDEs and octaBDEs are ubiquitous and Californians will continue to be exposed to them after June 1, 2006. On May 27, 2005 the California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal/EPA) Secretary directed the formation of a workgroup of representatives from Cal/EPA Boards, Departments and Office (BDO) to consider the nature and extent of the PBDE problem and to recommend actions Cal/EPA could take to mitigate exposures to reduce risks of potential PBDE health effects. The California Department of Health Services (DHS) also contributed expertise and provided representatives to the Cal/EPA PBDE Workgroup. This report was prepared in response to the Cal/EPA Secretary's directive.