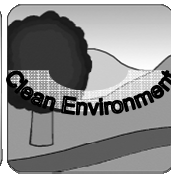


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A Project of Women's Voices for the Earth

NEWS RELEASE

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X-Ray Testing Reveals Toxic Flame Retardants and Lead in Everyday Consumer Products

High-Tech "Gun" detects toxic chemicals in electronics, furniture and jewelry

Advocates Make "May Day" Call for Policies to Address Toxic Exposures in the Home and Environment

(Albany, NY) Clean New York organizers revealed today that a new high-tech test for toxic chemicals finds lead and toxic flame retardants in many common home, office and personal products, including high levels of the toxic flame retardants in nearly every television tested. Coalition experts demonstrated how the high-tech x-ray "gun" works in the Albany office of New York State Assemblyman David Koon, sponsor of legislation to restrict lead in children's jewelry and who recently participated in a study of several toxic chemicals in people's bodies.

"This testing shows that you can walk into just about any home or office and find plenty of items containing toxic flame retardants and lead," said Bobbi Chase Wilding, Organizing Director of Clean New York. "The New York State Legislature now has an important opportunity to protect the public by passing of bills to limit the levels of lead in jewelry and to phase out the most commonly used toxic flame retardant, deca," she added.

The XRF Analyzer, a gun-shaped instrument, uses X-ray technology to nearly instantaneously detect the presence and levels of such known toxics as brominated flame retardants and lead. Testing done on furniture, mattresses, electronics equipment and jewelry in offices and homes found that each of us is likely living and working in environments that are rife with items containing toxic flame retardants including deca, and lead. Televisions, furniture, and children's items such as car seats and mattresses frequently test positive for bromine, indicating the likely presence of brominated flame retardants.

In addition, many pieces of inexpensive jewelry have tested positive for dangerous levels of lead. In a separate study, Ward Stone, Wildlife Pathologist for the Department of Environmental Conservation has found jewelry made up of as much as 95% lead.

"I am proud to sponsor the Lead in Children's Jewelry bill, along with Senator Alesi," said Assemblyman David Koon (D-I, Rochester). "Children need to be protected from the harmful effects of lead and this bill will help keep toxic jewelry out of their reach."

Legislation is in development that would ban deca from products where there are safer, effective, available, affordable fire-safe solutions. This past month, the State of Washington became the first state to enact such a ban.

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Brominated flame retardants and lead have both been linked to serious health concerns, especially in children. Deca has been shown to delay brain development, breaks down into already-banned penta and octa (other toxic flame retardants), which themselves have been found to harm the liver and thyroid, as well as also harming brain development. Previously thought to be unable to enter cells in the human body, deca has been found in human breast milk and umbilical cord blood.

A number of leading electronics manufacturers, including Sony, Samsung, Phillips and Dell already meet the highest fire safety standards without decaBDE.

Lead is a well-documented poison at high levels and a powerful neurotoxin even at low levels. Lead lowers IQ levels, depresses learning abilities, and decreases inhibition, leading to aggressive behavior, greater disciplinary problems and even increased risk of criminal behavior.

"As a mother of a two-year-old, it's important to me to have a healthy, non-toxic home," commented Chase Wilding. "We have the science showing the harm these chemicals cause. We have the safer substitutions. Today, on May first, we're making a "May Day" call to policymaker to protect all New Yorkers. My daughter, all children, deserve no less."

Previous studies in New York and elsewhere have found PBDEs and lead in household dust, and others have found the same chemicals in people's bodies.

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Clean New York, a project of the national organization Women's Voices for the Earth, is a state-level organization dedicated to empowering women to advocate on their own behalf for environmental health and justice. The organization works through policy advocacy, grassroots outreach and collaboration with other groups throughout the state and around the country. More information about Clean New York is available at www.clean-ny.org.