

Miller, Diane M. (CDC/NIOSH/EID)

From: Mike Belliveau <mbelliveau@preventharm.org>
Sent: Friday, December 30, 2011 12:52 PM
To: NIOSH Docket Office (CDC)
Subject: Carcinogen and REL Policy Assessment, Docket Number NIOSH-240

Date: December 30, 2011

To: NIOSH Docket Office

Robert A. Taft Laboratories, 4676 Columbia Parkway, MS-C34, Cincinnati, Ohio
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Submitted by e-mail to: nioshdocket@cdc.gov

From: Mike Belliveau, Executive Director, Environmental Health Strategy Center

RE: Request for Information: Announcement of Carcinogen and Recommended Exposure Limit (REL) Policy Assessment, Docket Number NIOSH-240

The Environmental Health Strategy Center welcomes NIOSH's review of its carcinogen policy. Founded in Maine in 2002, the Environmental Health Strategy Center promotes human health and safer chemicals in a sustainable economy. We believe that every person has a right to a clean and healthful environment wherever they live, work, learn or play. We envision a future that provides good green jobs, healthy communities, and social justice for all.. We focus on two program areas – Healthy People, which seeks to improve health through safer chemical policy reform at the federal and state levels, and Sustainable Economy, which models a green chemistry economic development strategy to produce bioplastics from Maine potatoes and other biomass. Through the Strategy Center's leadership, the State of Maine has set the pace nationally for policy solutions that protect human health from unnecessary toxic chemicals, such as mercury, lead, arsenic and PBDE flame retardants. In 2008, we led the campaign to pass the Kids Safe Products Act, the first comprehensive safer chemical policy reform in the United States. We lead two successful, collaborative partnerships, the Alliance for a Clean and Healthy Maine, a health-based coalition working to replace unnecessary dangerous chemicals with safer alternatives, and the Sustainable Bioplastics Council of Maine, a business-based coalition that aims to boost Maine's green economy through the use and development of non-toxic, petroleum-free and bio-compostable products.

This experience has led the Environmental Health Strategy Center to question the use of risk assessment and the resulting use of RELs and action levels for substances that have no safe

level of exposure. We believe that RELS and action levels can create a false sense of security based in politics instead of science. Over-reliance on risk assessment for decision-making also misses common-sense pollution prevention opportunities.

In 2009, in its report *Science and Decisions* (the "Silver Book"), the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) cited the failure of risk assessment to support timely decisions or best solutions to environmental health threats. NAS said that rather than determining an acceptable level of risk for a given exposure scenario, EPA should use risk assessment to characterize which solution is preferable among risk management options identified in advance. This would align EPA science policy with similar methods such as technology options analysis, alternatives assessment, and substitution planning.

The Environmental Health Strategy Center's In response to Docket 240's five questions, the Environmental Health Strategy Center recommends that NIOSH consider a new health-based approach to carcinogens that is based on the 2009 NAS recommendations.

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