



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

Press Release

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State Launches Green Chemistry Initiative

Cal/EPA Leads Effort to Reduce, Eliminate Toxics in Products

SACRAMENTO – Linda Adams, Secretary for Environmental Protection, directed the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) to lead a Green Chemistry Initiative. DTSC will lead Cal/EPA's departments to fundamentally change how government and business work together to deal with waste before it is generated. This new approach is similar to measures adopted by the European Union and the Canadian government to encourage greater manufacturer responsibility.

For the last century, environmental protection has concentrated on capturing and storing hazardous waste. Green chemistry is a fundamentally new approach to environmental protection, transitioning away from managing toxic chemicals at the end of the lifecycle, to reducing or eliminating their use altogether.

"Our Cal/EPA team will be working in partnership with business and environmental groups on green chemistry for a healthier California," said Maureen Gorsen, the director of DTSC. "This initiative will provide a scientific basis and economic opportunity for environmentally safe products."

When implementing green chemistry, those designing consumer products and determining manufacturing processes consider public health and environmental effects of those products at the design phase. Green chemistry practitioners design new products and processes that reduce or eliminate the use or generation of hazardous substances.

In a memo to her directors initiating the Green Chemistry Initiative, Linda Adams, Secretary for Environmental Protection, wrote: "In the absence of a unifying approach, interest groups and policy makers have been attempting to take these issues on one-by-one. Product by product, chemical by chemical, and now even city by city approaches can often have unintended, even regrettable consequences, even with the best of intentions. I believe we need to develop a coordinated, comprehensive strategy..."

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The Green Chemistry Initiative will provide recommendations for developing a consistent means for evaluating risk, reducing exposure, encouraging less-toxic industrial processes, and identifying safer, non-chemical alternatives. Most importantly, the Green Chemistry Initiative will ensure a comprehensive and collaborative approach, to increase accountability and effectiveness of environmental programs across state government.

Increasing international attention on the health and environmental effects of toxic exposure in everyday products has led to a variety of new laws. The European Union and the Canadian government have adopted measures to evaluate hazards and reduce exposure to toxic chemicals. This year the California Legislature is considering more than 40 bills which are aimed at controlling individual toxic chemicals or products.

DTSC Director Gorsen will manage the Green Chemistry Initiative in collaboration with other CalEPA departments and boards, as well as other state and federal government agencies, industry and stakeholders.

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