



DTSC Receives Grant to Develop Guidance for Safer Consumer Products

The state Department of Toxic Substances Control, with the aid of a federal grant, is developing guidance that could be a model for other states and businesses seeking to expand their green chemistry programs.

The goal is to help businesses reduce toxic chemicals in consumer products. DTSC is using a \$105,000 grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, along with \$125,000 of its own funds for a total of \$230,000 over three years, to boost the development of tools and training to help businesses in their “alternatives analysis” efforts.

Such analysis seeks to evaluate replacing a toxic chemical with one that is safer while avoiding a “regrettable substitute” – inadvertently replacing the toxic chemical with one that is even worse.

The guidance that DTSC is creating will be the most comprehensive of its kind in the nation, said Bob Boughton, a senior engineer at DTSC who authored the grant proposal and is part of the Department’s landmark Safer Consumer Products program.

Some businesses and other groups perform more narrowly focused “alternative assessments,” but DTSC’s “alternatives analysis” requirement is broader, Boughton said.

“All of the funded work is transferable and has national meaning,” he said. “No one prescribes as complete or as comprehensive a study as we are requiring.”

One of DTSC’s objectives is to detect gaps in its evolving alternatives analysis guidance. One way to do that is through a pilot project in which the Department will perform its own





Grant

analysis with the help of an industry partner.

“We will test drive the guidance,” Boughton explained. “That will let us know where the weak points are as well as identify tools, methods, data and approaches to do an alternative analysis.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, in announcing [the grant](#), said DTSC will work with stakeholders to develop a new approach for evaluating safer alternatives to so-called “chemicals of concern” in some products that people use on a regular basis..

The DTSC grant is one of two that US EPA awarded. The other, for \$230,915, will help University of California, Berkeley, train students in green-chemistry programs. Students will apply that training to help five businesses find ways to reduce toxic chemicals in their supply chains, the US EPA said.

The grant comes at a watershed moment for DTSC. The Department is embarking on one of the most ambitious safer consumer products [programs](#) in the nation.

The first three draft priority-product combinations were announced earlier this year. The Department followed that up in September with a draft [work plan](#) that identifies potential product categories to be evaluated over the next three years. Additional priority-product combinations will result from that review.

“Knowing how to properly conduct an alternatives analysis will result in robust decisions on selection of safer alternatives, thus reducing the use of, and exposure to, products that have the potential to have adverse impacts to human health and the environment,” DTSC officials wrote in the grant application.

The grant will help:

- Expand the number of tools that manufacturers can use to conduct alternatives analysis;
- DTSC, with the help of a contractor, conduct an alternatives analysis for at least one product as a pilot study;
- Finance training sessions and workshops on alternatives analysis.