



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
Department of Toxic Substances Control

News Release

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DTSC Hosts Third Nanotechnology Symposium, Focusing on Regulation of this Rapidly Emerging Technology

Sacramento, CA -- The California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) enjoyed a large turnout today for its third nanotechnology symposium, which drew national attention. This third installment, entitled "NanoRegulation – Anticipating the Smallest Threats and the Largest Opportunities," explored regulatory aspects of nanotechnology, U.S.EPA's role, DTSC's chemical information call-in program including nanoscale materials, and industry and environmental perspectives.

The symposium provided a forum for global perspectives on nanotechnology. Nanotechnology is the design, characterization, production, and application of structures, devices and systems by controlling the shape and size of materials at the nanometer scale. A nanometer is one billionth of a meter.

"The regulation of nanotechnology is best served by a collaborative approach that includes all stakeholders in the decision-making process," said DTSC Acting Director Maziar Movassaghi. "Symposia like these are important because they provide an excellent venue for bringing industry, government regulators and academia together to discuss the environmental challenges and health concerns of this emerging field. "

"DTSC sees nanotechnology as the 'new plastic' because it will show up in many industrial applications and consumer products," Movassaghi added.

Materials and devices designed at the nanoscale level are being used or considered for use in applications as diverse as cancer treatment and sporting goods, to scratch-resistant automotive coatings and cosmetics.

"Health, environmental, worker safety and consumer regulatory agencies are not yet prepared to regulate this emerging sector," explained Sheila Davis with Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition. "DTSC's nanotechnology symposia are an important first step toward creating awareness."

"Nanotechnology will be an increasingly important part of products ranging from electronics to energy, medicine and others," commented Mary Beth Miller with Unidym. "Safety and Environmental Stewardship are top priorities for Unidym and other companies, as it is for DTSC, and we look forward to working with the state and others to develop necessary information."

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Co-sponsored by the University of California's Toxic Substances Research and Teaching Program, today's symposium featured a keynote address by California Assembly Member Mike Feuer (D-Los Angeles), who authored the landmark green chemistry bill, Assembly Bill 1879, which Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed into law last year. AB 1879 requires DTSC to adopt regulations that establish a process requiring product manufacturers to assess alternatives for safer, less-toxic design of products. DTSC is currently working with experts in the nanotechnology sector to incorporate the benefits of green chemistry approaches, pollution prevention techniques, and sustainable manufacturing strategies to prevent potential adverse public health and environmental consequences.

Other distinguished speakers at the symposium, in addition to Assembly Member Feuer, were Assembly Members Mike Davis (D-Los Angeles), and Jeff Miller (R-Corona), as well as Richard Denison, PhD, with the Environmental Defense Fund, Mark Bungler with Lux Research, UCLA Professor Timothy Malloy, and Erick Hoek, PhD, from UCLA.

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The mission of the Department of Toxic Substances Control is to protect public health, safety, and the environment from toxic harm.