

**Center for Health, Environment and Justice
Advocates for Environmental Human Rights
Allergy and Environmental Illness Group
American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
Basel Action Network (BAN) * Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League
Breast Cancer Action * Breast Cancer Fund * Buckeye Environmental Network
Calhoun County Resource Watch * California Teamsters Public Affairs Council
Caney Fork Headwaters Association * Center for Corporate Policy
Center for Environmental Health * Center for International Environmental Law
Center for Media and Democracy * Center for Public Environmental Oversight
Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment * Chemical Weapons Working Group
Chlorine Free Products Association * Citizens Against Ruining the Environment
Citizens' Environmental Coalition * Citizens for Safe Water Around Badger
Citizens Leading for Environmental Action and Responsibility * Clean New York
Clean Water Action * Commonweal * Communities Against Toxics
Communities for a Better Environment
Community In-power and Development Association Inc
Concerned Citizens of Lake Twp. * Concerned Citizens of Russell
Concerned Citizens of the Plainview-Old Bethpage Community Inc.
Connecticut Coalition for Environmental Justice
Cumberland Countians for Peace & Justice * Downwinders At Risk
Ecological Health Organization * Eco-Cycle Inc * Ecology Action Centre
Ecology Center * Electronics TakeBack Coalition
Empire State Consumer Project * Environmental Health Fund
Environmental Health Strategy Center * Environmental Research Foundation
Farmworker Association of Florida * Farmworker Health and Safety Institute
Finger Lakes Zero Waste Coalition * Friends of the Earth US
GAIA: Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives/ Global Anti-Incinerator Alliance
Global Community Monitor * Glynn Environmental Coalition
Great Neck Breast Cancer Coalition * Green Change
Greenaction for Health and Environmental Justice * Green Delaware
Green Press Initiative * Greenpeace * Habitat Map
Hands Across The River Coalition * Health Care Without Harm-Boston
Healthy Building Network * Healthy Child Healthy World
Hopewell Junction Citizens for Clean Water * Indiana Forest Alliance
Indiana Toxics Action * Indigenous Environmental Network
Institute for a Sustainable Future * Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
Institute for Children's Environmental Health * Institute for Local Self-Reliance
Institute for Social Ecology * International POPs Elimination Network
Ithaca South Hill Industrial Pollution * Just Transition Alliance
Kentucky Environmental Foundation * Kids for Saving Earth
Learning Disabilities Association of America * Lone Tree Council * MassCOSH
Mossville Environmental Action Now
National Association for the Dually Diagnosed
Natural Resources Council of Maine * Neighbors Against the Burner**

**Network for Environmental & Economic Responsibility of the -
United Church of Christ
New York Committee for Occupational Safety and Health
North Carolina Occupational Health and Safety Project(NCOSH)
Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance * Nuclear Information and Resource Service
NYPIRG * NY Vapor Intrusion Alliance * Old Bedford Village Development, Inc.
Organic Consumers Association * People For Puget Sound
The Peoples Advocate * Pesticide Free Zone
Physicians for Social Responsibility * Pioneer Valley Preservation Coalition
Protect All Children's Environment
The Public Health and Environmental Health Committee of the Puerto Rico -
College of Physicians and Surgeons * Science and Environmental Health Network
Stop the Spray Marin * The Story of Stuff Project
TEDX (The Endocrine Disruption Exchange)
Texas Campaign for the Environment * Tittabawassee River Watch
ToxicTargets.org * U.S. PIRG * USMWF.ORG, Inc * Washington Toxics Coalition
WE ACT for Environmental Justice, Inc. (WE ACT) * West County Toxics Coalition
Western Broome Environmental Stakeholder Coalition
WNY Council on Occupational Safety & Health * Women's Voices for the Earth
Worksafe * Working Films**

January 16, 2009

Dear President-Elect Obama:

We are writing to express our deep concern over the Bush administration's departing gift to the chemical industry on October 15th, 2008 -- the formation of yet another review of the EPA's health assessment study on dioxins, one of the most toxic chemicals on earth.

We request that you direct the EPA to cancel the unnecessary review and release the Dioxin Reassessment so that the EPA and others can move forward in developing protective dioxin policies and standards.

The EPA completed its first report on dioxins in 1985, and began its reassessment in 1988. The EPA began its second reassessment in 1991. Since that time the completion of this report has been repeatedly delayed by the chemical industry for close to twenty years. The EPA already released a final draft in 2000 and an EPA Science Advisory Board (SAB) already reviewed this report in 2000-2001. In June, 2001, the EPA Science Advisory Board sent a letter to EPA Administrator Christine Whitman (see enclosed) urging the reassessment be completed and released 'expeditiously.' Since then it's been further delayed and another review is not necessary. This new review will take several years to complete at least, and will further delay regulation of this highly persistent bioaccumulative toxic (PBT) chemical.

Dioxins are a family of chemicals that are known to cause cancer and to disrupt the endocrine system. They are active in the body at very low levels. Dioxins can cause developmental and immune effects at levels close to those currently found in the general population. Every American eats dioxins when they consume fatty foods, and nearly every American has measurable levels of this chemical in their body. The toxicity of dioxins is of such concern that they have been targeted for global phase out by over 100 nations across the world through the

Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants. They've also been targeted for virtual elimination in the Great Lakes through the U.S. and Canadian Great Lakes Binational Toxics Strategy.

The EPA study—called the "Dioxin Reassessment"—still remains a draft, which has stymied the agency's development of federal regulations for over 15 years. Evidence has accumulated since EPA began its reassessment in 1988 that dioxins cause many other health problems even at low levels, including cancer, developmental problems in children, immunologic problems in children and adults, reproductive problems in adults, and diabetes.

In 1985, EPA concluded that there was an increased cancer risk in humans at dioxin exposure levels lower than had been estimated by any government agency anywhere in the world. Dioxin is the most potent carcinogen ever evaluated by the agency. Scientists at EPA have long concluded dioxins and dioxin-like compounds are highly toxic, but a strong coalition of industries responsible for generating dioxins as a by-product of production and disposal have successfully stalled the completion of this health assessment report for over 15 years. Chlorine-based industries have demanded reviews, reassessments and re-analyses. Each re-assessment and review affirmed the findings and newer scientific data continues to strengthen the conclusions that dioxins are a serious public health threat. Most recently, the National Academies released a 2006 report confirming what numerous scientific panels have concluded: dioxin is a potent cancer-causing chemical. The chlorine-based industry is following the tobacco industry's strategies to keep information from the public and delay release of the report. Enclosed is a document that summarizes these delays.

While panels are convened, people in communities across the country are continuing to be exposed to this highly toxic chemical. Many state regulating agencies have ignored dioxin contamination and risks because of the lack of a final health assessment from the EPA. Dioxin contamination is particularly high in areas with dioxin sources like incinerators, smelters, pulp and paper mills, chemical factories or other industries that use chlorine. These dioxin sources are predominantly located in low-income communities of color, making this a major issue of environmental justice and racism. The disposal of polyvinyl chloride (PVC) plastic is the largest source of dioxin-forming chlorine in solid waste. PVC is the leading contributor of chlorine to four combustion sources— municipal solid waste incinerators, backyard burn barrels, medical waste incinerators and secondary copper smelters—that account for an estimated 80% of dioxin air emissions. Residents living near PVC chemical plants in Mossville, LA had three times more dioxin in their blood than the average U.S. citizen. Dioxin has been found at hundreds of Superfund toxic waste sites. It was a contaminant at the Love Canal landfill in NY where over 900 families were relocated and in Agent Orange, the herbicide sprayed in Vietnam that resulted in major health impacts for Vietnam Veterans. Dioxins have been found in milk, cheese, beef, pork, fish, chicken, birds, deer, turkey, squirrel, and worms, as well as soil and sewage sludge.

We request that you direct the EPA to cancel the unnecessary review and release the Dioxin Reassessment so that the EPA and others can move forward in developing protective dioxin policies and standards.

We also request the opportunity to meet with your team to discuss this further. To schedule a meeting, please contact Mike Schade at CHEJ: (212) 964-3680 / mike@chej.org

Thank you for your attention to this critical public health and environmental justice issue.

Sincerely,

Lois Gibbs, Executive Director
Center for Health, Environment and Justice

Michele L. Roberts, Campaign and Policy
Coordinator
Advocates for Environmental Human Rights

Sandra Boswell PEI
Allergy and Environmental Illness Group

Laura Abulafia, MHS, Director,
Environmental Health Initiative
American Association on Intellectual and
Developmental Disabilities (Formerly
AAMR)

Jim Puckett, Executive Director
Basel Action Network (BAN)

Lou Zeller
Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League

Barbara A. Brenner, Executive Director
Breast Cancer Action

Janet Nudelman
Breast Cancer Fund

Teresa Mills, Director
Buckeye Environmental Network

Diane Wilson
Calhoun County Resource Watch

Barry Broad, Executive Director
California Teamsters Public Affairs Council

Rev. Charles Lord
Caney Fork Headwaters Association

Charlie Cray
Center for Corporate Policy

Ansje Miller
Center for Environmental Health

Glenn Wiser, Senior Attorney
Center for International Environmental Law

John Stauber, Founder & Executive Director
Center for Media and Democracy

Lenny Siegel
Center for Public Environmental Oversight

Luke W. Cole, Executive Director
Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment

Craig Williams, Director
Chemical Weapons Working Group

Archie J. Beaton, Executive Director
Chlorine Free Products Association

Ellen Meeks Rendulich, Director
Citizens Against Ruining the Environment ~
C.A.R.E.

Barbara Warren, Executive Director
Citizens' Environmental Coalition

Laura Olah, Executive Director
Citizens for Safe Water Around Badger

Jackie Elliott
Citizens Leading for Environmental Action
and Responsibility

Kathleen A. Curtis, Policy Director
Clean New York, a project of Women's
Voices for the Earth

Lynn Thorp
National Campaigns Coordinator
Clean Water Action

Davis Baltz, M.S.
Commonweal

Ralph Ryder, Coordinator
Communities Against Toxics

Nile Malloy
Communities for a Better Environment

Hilton Kelley, CEO / Founder
Community In-power and Development
Association Inc

Chris Borello, President
Concerned Citizens of Lake Twp.

Jana Chicoine
Concerned Citizens of Russell
Pioneer Valley Preservation Coalition

Carol Meschkow, President
Concerned Citizens of the
Plainview-Old Bethpage Community Inc.

Mark A. Mitchell M.D., MPH, President
Connecticut Coalition for Environmental
Justice

Rev. Walter Stark
Cumberland Countians for Peace & Justice

Jim Schermbeck, Field Organizer
Downwinders At Risk

Carolyn Wysocki, President
Ecological Health Organization

Eric Lombardi, Executive Director
Eco-Cycle Inc

Aaron Schneider
Ecology Action Centre

Tracey Easthope
Ecology Center

Barbara Kyle, National Coordinator
Electronics TakeBack Coalition

Judy Braiman, President
Empire State Consumer Project

Judith Robinson, Director of Programs
Environmental Health Fund

Mike Belliveau, Executive Director
Environmental Health Strategy Center

Peter Montague, Ph.D., Executive Director
Environmental Research Foundation

Jeannie Economos, Pesticide Safety and
Environmental Health Project Coordinator
Farmworker Association of Florida

Teresa Niedda, Director, Farmworker
Health and Safety Institute

Katherine Bourbeau
Finger Lakes Zero Waste Coalition

Ian Illuminato, Health and Environment
Campaigner
Friends of the Earth US

Monica Wilson
GAIA: Global Alliance for Incinerator
Alternatives/ Global Anti-Incinerator Alliance

Denny Larson
Global Community Monitor

Bill Owens, President
Glynn Environmental Coalition

Laura Weinberg, President
Great Neck Breast Cancer Coalition

Marnie Glickman, Executive Director
Green Change

Bradley Angel
Greenaction for Health and Environmental
Justice

Alan Muller, Executive Director
Green Delaware

Tyson Miller
Green Press Initiative

Rick Hind, Legislative Director
Greenpeace

Michael Heimbinder
Habitat Map

Edwin Revria, President
Hands Across The River Coalition

Bill Ravanese
Health Care Without Harm-Boston

Tom Lent, Policy Director
Healthy Building Network

Christopher Gavigan, CEO / Executive
Director
Healthy Child Healthy World

Debra Hall, Founder
Hopewell Junction Citizens for Clean Water

Rhonda Baird, Director
Indiana Forest Alliance

Lin Kaatz Chary, PhD, MPH
Indiana Toxics Action

Tom Goldtooth, Executive Director
Indigenous Environmental Network

Jamie Harvie, Executive Director
Institute for a Sustainable Future

David Wallinga, MD, MPA
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy

Aimee Boulanger, Program Director
Institute for Children's Environmental Health

Brenda Platt, Co-Director
Institute for Local Self-Reliance

Brian Tokar
Institute for Social Ecology

Bjorn Beeler, International Coordinator
International POPs Elimination Network

Ken Deschere
Ithaca South Hill Industrial Pollution

Jose T. Bravo, Executive Director
Just Transition Alliance

Elizabeth Crowe, Director
Kentucky Environmental Foundation

Tessa Hill, President
Kids for Saving Earth

Maureen Swanson
Learning Disabilities Association of America

Terry Miller, Chairman
Michelle Hurd Riddick
Lone Tree Council

Tolle Graham
MassCOSH

Mr. Edgar Mouton, President
Mossville Environmental Action Now
(MEAN)

Robert J. Fletcher, DSW, ACSW
Founder and Chief Executive Officer
National Association for the Dually
Diagnosed

Matt Prindiville, Project Director, Toxics and
Sustainable Production
Natural Resources Council of Maine

Nancy Hone, Coordinator
Neighbors Against the Burner

Donald B. Clark,
Network for Environmental & Economic
Responsibility of the
United Church of Christ

Joel Shufro, Executive Director
New York Committee for Occupational
Safety and Health

Marilyn Baird, Coordinator
North Carolina Occupational Health and
Safety Project(NCOSH)

Niaz Dorry
Executive Director
Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance

Diane D'Arrigo, Radioactive Waste Project
Director
Nuclear Information and Resource Service
(NIRS)

Laura Haight, Senior Environmental
Associate
NYPIRG

Bruce Oldfield, Chair
NY Vapor Intrusion Alliance

John G. Andrade, Executive Director
Old Bedford Village Development, Inc.

Ronnie Cummins, Director
Organic Consumers Association

Heather Trim, Urban Bays and Toxics
Program Manager
People For Puget Sound

Beth Zilbert, Founder
The Peoples Advocate

Whitney Merchant
Pesticide Free Zone
Stop the Spray Marin

Kristen Welker-Hood, ScD MSN RN
Director, Environment and Health Programs
Physicians for Social Responsibility

Elizabeth O'Nan
Protect All Children's Environment

Tomas Hernandez MD
The Public Health and Environmental
Health Committee of the Puerto Rico
College of Physicians and Surgeons

Ted Schettler MD, MPH
Science and Environmental Health Network

Annie Leonard
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Tittabawassee River Watch

Stephanie Smolen
ToxicTargets.org

Liz Hitchcock, Public Health Advocate
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USMWF.ORG, Inc

Laurie Valeriano, Policy Director
Washington Toxics Coalition

Peggy M. Shepard, Executive Director
WE ACT for Environmental Justice, Inc.
(WE ACT)

Henry Clark, Executive Director
West County Toxics Coalition

James Little
Western Broome Environmental
Stakeholder Coalition

Roger Cook, Executive Director
WNY Council on Occupational Safety &
Health

Tracy Lakatua, Executive Director,
Women's Voices for the Earth

Suzanne Murphy, Executive Director
Worksafe, Inc.

Judith Helfand
Working Films

Enclosures: EPA Science Advisory Board 2001 letter to EPA Administrator Christine Whitman
History of Dangerous Delays on Dioxin Protective Policy