

EPA Updates Health Risk of Dioxins

DINA CAPPIELLO, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A long-awaited federal study on the health effects of dioxins released Friday says the persistent contaminants at current exposures don't pose significant health risks.

The analysis by the Environmental Protection Agency was more than two decades in the making. It sets the first benchmark for how much dioxin a person can be exposed to over lifetime without potentially experiencing health effects other than cancer. Those include damage to the immune and reproductive systems, skin rashes and liver damage.

The EPA already has a benchmark for cancer risk posed by dioxin, which is a known human carcinogen. That risk level is being re-evaluated separately.

The updated figure released Friday could lead to more stringent cleanup standards for hazardous waste sites and tighter limits on the amount of dioxin allowed in water and air.

"By releasing this important part of the scientific assessment, we can begin to develop a cohesive plan to safeguard American families from dioxin exposure," said Rep. Ed Markey, D-Mass., who wrote to the EPA last month pressing the agency to release the overdue assessment. It has been in the works since the mid-1980s. Environmental groups blame industry opposition for repeated delays.

The American Chemistry Council, a chemical industry trade group, said in a statement Friday that the EPA's analysis was flawed and would provide no public health benefit, since the "EPA contends that current levels of dioxin do not pose a health concern."

Dioxin is released by coal-fired plants, burning waste and other industrial processes. People are exposed by eating fish and other animal fats, where it accumulates after falling to the ground.

Since 1987, the amount of dioxide being released into the air has declined by 90 percent, according to the EPA.

Online: EPA Dioxin site: www.epa.gov/dioxin [1]

Follow Dina Cappiello's environment coverage on Twitter (*at*)[dinacappiello](https://twitter.com/dinacappiello)

Source URL (retrieved on 12/28/2014 - 1:57pm):

<http://www.chem.info/news/2012/02/epa-updates-health-risk-dioxins>

EPA Updates Health Risk of Dioxins

Published on Chem.Info (<http://www.chem.info>)

Links:

[1] <http://www.epa.gov/dioxin>