

EPA's TCE Ban: A Vital Step for Public Health

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What Happened?

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has recently taken a significant step in safeguarding public health by [proposing new regulations](#) under our nation's primary chemicals law, the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) that would protect people from exposure to trichloroethylene (TCE), a very toxic chemical that causes serious health risks. The proposed rule would ban the production, import, processing, and distribution in commerce for all uses of TCE.

Yet, despite the known dangers of TCE and the undeniable scientific evidence supporting the need for this action, the chemical industry is trying to undermine this critical regulation by incorrectly claiming the proposed rule is "inconsistent with the science."

Why It Matters

TCE causes so many different harms at such low levels that, when finalized, this action will bring widespread benefits to countless individuals.

TCE can cause multiple types of cancer – kidney cancer, liver cancer, and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma cancers. In addition, exposure to TCE can cause kidney, liver, and neurological damage, harm the immune system and reproduction, and result in heart defects in developing fetuses.

What is particularly concerning is that some of the harm TCE causes—such as to the immune system and fetal heart development—occurs at extremely low levels that often go unnoticed.

People can be exposed in many ways: from chemical plants producing and releasing TCE into the environment; facilities using it for degreasing parts; and the intrusion of TCE into people's homes, schools, and workplaces from industrial contamination of soil and groundwater.

Our Take

We applaud EPA for taking this long-overdue action.

The extensively peer reviewed science clearly demonstrates the high toxicity of TCE and that exposure to even small amounts of TCE can harm a person in multiple ways. ***The only inconsistency with the science lies in the chemical industry's misleading claims.***

Once again, the chemical industry is resorting to the same tired playbook—attempting to downplay the dangers of TCE—all in the interest of protecting their profits. There is no valid justification to continue subjecting people to the perils posed by this pernicious chemical.

It is imperative that EPA expeditiously finalize its ban of TCE.

Go Deeper

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