

Accelerated Phase-Out of Persistent Toxic Substances

A resolution adopted at the 1995 OPHA Annual General Meeting

Code: 1995-03 (RES) *Status:* Active

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS toxic, persistent and bioaccumulative substances continue to be manufactured, imported, used and disposed of in Canada such that the biophysical environment and human health continue to be at risk; and

WHEREAS a number of organizations have called for the accelerated phase out of persistent toxic, bioaccumulative substances, including the International Joint commission, the Ontario Round Table on Environment and Economy, The Premier's council and the Ontario Task Force on the Primary Prevention of Cancer.

WHEREAS the Ontario Ministry of the Environment and Energy has listed 90 substances and classes of substances, including some pesticides, on its Candidate Substances List, for which scientific evidence indicates a rationale for their phase-out; and

WHEREAS the current Candidate Substances List needs to be revised for the possible addition of environmental contaminants with estrogenic activity (xenoestrogens), given their implications for reproductive toxicity and possibly breast cancer; and

WHEREAS there is limited progress on phasing out the manufacture and use of most substances on the Candidate Substances List; and

WHEREAS the public, the business sector and public agencies such as Boards of Health have insufficient information that explains when persistent or toxic or bioaccumulative substances occur in products in everyday use by society.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Ontario Public Health Association advocate for appropriate measures to address the environmental and human health risks posed by persistent, bioaccumulative toxic substances, including initiatives to ban, phase out or reduce the production, importation and use of these substances where feasible.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The Environmental Health Group will work in conjunction with the OPHA Board to carry out the following advocacy strategy in response to the continued manufacture and use of persistent, bioaccumulative substances in Ontario:

1. Distribute copies of the background report and resolution to the following government ministries and non-governmental organizations: the Ontario Ministry of Health, the Ontario Ministry of Environment and Energy (OMOEE), the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, Health Canada, Environment Canada, Consumer and Corporate Affairs Canada, Ontario Boards of Health, the International Joint Commission (IJC) Virtual Elimination Task Force on Persistent Toxic Substances, The Canadian Public Health Association, The Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors, the Ontario Environment Network and the Conservation Council;
2. Request the Ontario Ministry of Health to encourage the Ontario Ministry of Environment and Energy and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs to accelerate the phase-out (i.e., “sunsetting”) of Candidate Substances;
3. Request the Ontario Ministry of Environment and Energy to revitalize its efforts in the ban, phase-out or reduction of substances on the Candidate Substances List;
4. Request the Ontario Ministry of Environment and Energy to accelerate technical feasibility and socioeconomic impact analyses for each substance or group of substances listed in the Candidate Substance List;
5. Request the Ontario Ministry of Environment and Energy to revise its list of Candidate Substances for bans, phase-outs or reductions to include substances in the environment with estrogenic activity;
6. Request the Ontario Ministry of Environment and Energy, in conjunction with Health Canada, Environment Canada and Consumer and Corporate Affairs Canada to:
 - a) Generate a report that identifies the consumer and commercial products that contain, are manufactured from, or generate by-products that give rise to persistent or toxic bioaccumulative substances;
 - b) Identify alternative products that do not contain or are dependent on these substances;
 - c) Provide this information to municipalities and the business sector so that they have the knowledge to discontinue the purchase and use of persistent toxic substances where possible;
7. Request Consumer and Corporate Affairs Canada to implement a programme on clear and effective labelling of all ingredients in consumer and commercial products, including persistent, toxic or bioaccumulative substances;

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8. Request that the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs actively promote to the agricultural sector the use of alternatives to the pesticides identified in the OMOEE's Candidate Substances List;
 9. Request all Boards of Health to endorse that the purchase and use of Candidate Substances be discontinued where feasible, and to actively participate in public education on alternatives to these products;
 10. Request the International Joint Commission (IJC) Virtual Elimination Task Force on Persistent Toxic Substances to expedite the promotion and adoption of measures related to screening persistent toxic contaminants for phase out; the "sunsetting" of 11 critical pollutants they have identified; and the implementation of indicators of ecosystem health that are sensitive to toxic contaminants; and
 11. Request the Canadian Public Health Association, the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors, the Ontario Environment Network and the Conservation Council to support Canada-wide initiatives to ban, phase-out or reduce the production, importation and use of substances that are persistent, toxic and bioaccumulative.

The Environmental Health Workgroup will monitor the activities of the ministries and agencies identified in the above implementation plan towards the phase-out of persistent, toxic bioaccumulative substances. Furthermore, as information is provided by these organizations on the occurrence of persistent, toxic or bioaccumulative substances in consumer products, the Workgroup will deliberate on measures it can take to encourage avoidance of their use.

Regarding resolutions, position papers and motions:

Status: Policy statements (resolutions, position papers and motions) are categorized as:

ACTIVE, if:

1. The activities outlined in the policy statement's implementation plan have not yet been completed; or
2. The policy statement addresses an issue that is currently relevant to public health in Ontario.

ARCHIVED, if:

1. The activities outlined in the policy statement's implementation plan have been completed; or
2. The policy statement addresses an issue that is not currently relevant to public health in Ontario or is not based upon the most current evidence. The statement remains the position of the OPHA until a new statement is adopted that effectively reverses or essentially negates all or major elements of an earlier statement. In this instance, the former supersedes the latter

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