

Enviro-Thugs Sue To Keep Natural Food Flavors Out Of Food



By Josh Bloom — May 29, 2018



Why Is Nanogodzilla Stealing One Molecule Of Myrcene From Ginger Ale?

Photo: On Science Mall [1]

It's no secret that when it comes to science that I rank the Environmental Working Group (EWG) somewhere between plankton and pubic lice on the pro-science food chain. But life is not static and sometimes adjustments need be made. This is one of those times. EWG's rank needs to change. But it will have to wait because I am trying to determine what lies below pubic lice on the food chain. Not so obvious.

And it gets better! EWG has teamed up with another bunch of geniuses from seven other groups (1) to sue the FDA for allowing food to be added to food. That's not precisely true, but it's pretty damn close. The "Execrable Eight" are being represented by Earthjustice. Based on my reading of the lawsuit it is clear that a name change is in order. I'm gonna go with Earthinjustice, but I'm willing to consider alternatives should you have any. Here is their logo, which I might have altered a bit.



Here's the "injustice." The Earthinjustice lawyers are suing the FDA to ban the addition of chemicals that are suspected of causing cancer to food. Seems laudable enough. That is until you

realize that the chemicals that Earthinjustice is suing to ban are the **exact same chemicals** that you regularly eat almost every day. While this doesn't seem to faze a bunch of lawyers, any chemist reading this is more than likely to suffer a *grand mal* seizure. Yes, the science is that atrocious. Here are three of the seven chemicals that are in the lawsuit.

1. Myrcene

Myrcene occurs naturally in lemongrass, hops, basil, and mangos, and ginger. And in **marijuana (2)**. Are these items going to give us cancer simply because they contain varying amounts of a chemical that is allegedly a carcinogen? The screwballs responsible for [California's Proposition 65 list](#) ^[2] must think so since they classify myrcene as a carcinogen. And the ethically and scientifically challenged IARC **(3)** classifies myrcene as a Class 2B carcinogen - possibly carcinogenic to humans.

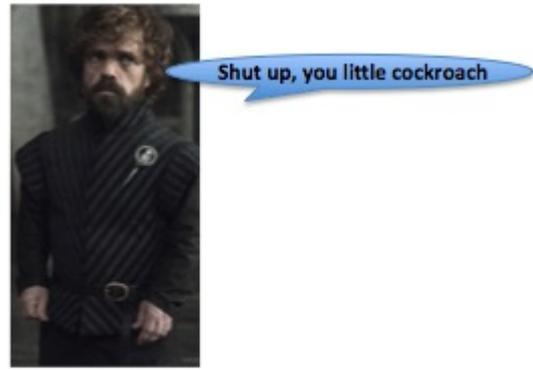
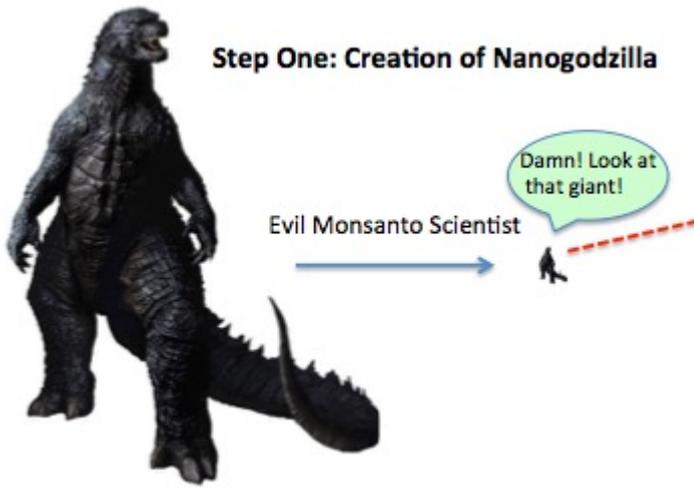
2. Pulegone

Pulegone is another naturally occurring chemical that is found all over the place. The minty-smelling chemical is found in peppermint, spearmint, blueberries, chamomile, black currant, catnip, black tea... Like myrcene, pulegone is listed as a carcinogen on Crazifornia's Prop 65 list, and a Class 2B carcinogen according to IARC. And dwelling somewhere on the nebulous border between ironic and hilarious, pulegone is one of the chemicals that is found in the mixture of essential oils that are used for aromatherapy! So, not only is aromatherapy a quack fad, but you will be sucking down carcinogens while you are being not cured **(4)**.

3. Methyleugenol

Methyleugenol is a clove-scented chemical that is also found widely in plants and fruits, for example, nutmeg, apples, banana, orange juice, grapefruit, among others. It is currently on the FDA's [Food additives permitted for direct addition to food for human consumption](#) ^[3]. So are pulegone and myrcene.

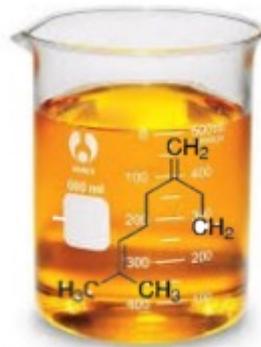
But the Earthinjustice lawyers, who may have their eyes on that 2018 Audi A8 (\$82.5 MSRP) that is just out of their reach, feel so strongly about removing these deadly chemicals from the FDA list that they are suing the agency. Well, they may be proficient in sucking money by using lawsuits, but the science sucks worse. How bad? I have designed a stupid experiment to demonstrate how stupid this suit is. It involves Nanogodzilla, the world's smallest monster. Who just happens to love myrcene.



With Nano-G in hand, let's run an experiment to demonstrate the insanity of Earthinjustice's

lawsuit.

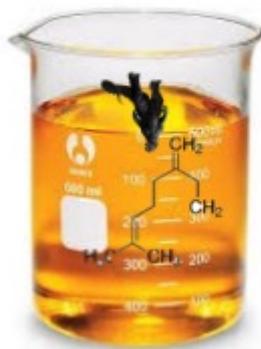
Step Two



**Nanobeaker of ginger ale containing one molecule of myrcene.
This is perfectly safe according to Earthinjustice.**

Now things get interesting. Nanogodzilla's penchant for myrcene comes into play...

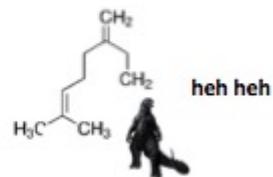
**Step Three:
Nano-G decides to steal the myrcene
molecule from the ginger ale**



Safe



Safe

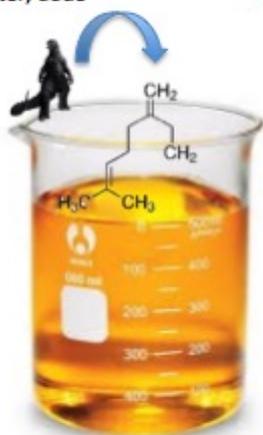


Mission complete

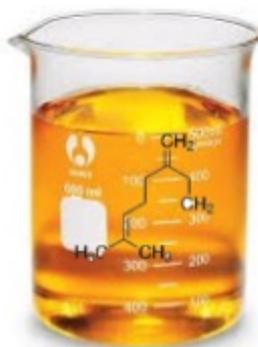
And now things get profoundly dumb...

Step Four:
Nano-G does, in fact, have a conscience. He decides to return the myrcene molecule to the ginger ale

Later, dude



Same myrcene molecule is returned to the formerly-safe ginger ale



But Earthinjustice now believes that The "artificially flavored" ginger ale

Causes cancer!!

While this experiment may sound a little nuts, scientifically it is identical to the concept behind the lawsuit, as well as all the misconceptions about the difference (or lack thereof) between natural and artificial flavors; often there is none (See my book [Natural and Artificial Flavors: What's the Difference?](#) [4]). It is also conceptually identical to the current nonsense about "added sugar," as if either your body or the Popsicle you're sucking on can tell where the sugar came from.

The *fact* that a chemical is a chemical regardless of its source is misunderstood by most Americans, with the help of the organic food and supplements industries. While it may be brilliant marketing, scientifically it is an abomination. There is no difference between a chemical that is isolated from a plant and the same chemical synthesized in a lab. None.

Even though the collection of scientists in the eight groups represented by Earthinjustice aren't all that swift, they must know this, right? But it doesn't really matter. What Earthinjustice is doing will not make a single person healthier or unhealthier. But the bank accounts of EWG, NRDC, and the others will be much healthier once the lawyers get done strong-arming agencies and companies by twisting the science.

That is all this suit is about. Power and money, science be damned.

NOTES:

(1) The other groups are Breast Cancer Prevention Partners, Center for Environmental Health, Center for Food Safety, Center for Science in the Public Interest, Environmental Defense Fund, Natural Resources Defense Council, and WE ACT for Environmental Justice. The anti-science Natural Resources Defense Council and Center for Food Safety are serving as co-counsel for their respective organizations. Yes, sir, you're looking at a collection of world-class science ignoramuses. But, of course, this is not about science. It's about money. These "green" groups all of a sudden become very sharp when they start going after the other green.

(2) Am I the only one who finds it **hilarious** that a bunch of environmentalists, who probably did more weed than Cheech and Chong, are suing the FDA to keep one of the principal volatile

chemicals in marijuana from being added to food?

(3) IARC, the International Agency for Research on Cancer, used to be a well-meaning organization, which tried to determine hazards of carcinogens. They used to look for carcinogens. Now they invent them.

(4) No, you will not get cancer from aromatherapy. Nor will you get it from eating peppermint, spearmint, blueberries, black currant, or drinking chamomile or black tea. As is the case with all toxins, dose determines harm. Whatever tiny amount of pulegone is inhaled or eaten isn't going to do anything. Otherwise, we'd all have cancer.

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Links

[1] <https://www.onlinesciencemall.com/products/borosilicate-bomex-glass-beaker-600ml>

[2] <https://oehha.ca.gov/media/downloads/proposition-65/p65list052518.pdf>

[3] <https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cdrh/cfdocs/cfcfr/CFRSearch.cfm?CFRPart=172&showFR=1>

[4] <https://www.amazon.com/Natural-Artificial-Flavors-Whats-Difference/dp/0991005597>