Another chemical misadventure

By ACSH Staff — April 12, 2013

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WGJlNJhC3B4

Yesterday's Dispatch took note of the new momentum (or lack thereof) for "reform" of the chemical law known as TSCA, which if enacted would needlessly tighten already protective regulations about chemical safety. Now we learn that, in the same spirit of hyper-precaution based on nothing other than political agenda, the powers-that-be in the high levels of California Health (actually the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, OEHHA) have decided after lengthy debate to put bisphenol-A (BPA) on their Prop 65 list.

Proposition 65, the "Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act", passed by a wide majority in 1986, mandated listing as a "carcinogen" or "reproductive toxicant" of any substance remotely linked to such effects by any regulatory body, anywhere. So the list which is extraordinarily lengthy now includes bisphenol-A, alongside such "scary toxins" as the anticoagulant warfarin, wood dust, salted fish, progesterone, and the statin drug, pravastatin (I could go on, trust me), as well as actual carcinogens such as tobacco and radionuclides.

Note however that BPA is present in many consumer products, including cans, epoxies, contact lenses, computers, etc., and has been in widespread and safe use for over 50 years. Every scientific body worldwide which has evaluated its safety has found nothing to worry about for typical consumer exposures. After vacillating for years, the California authorities finally caved to the small coterie of anti-chemical activists who have been calling for listing BPA for quite a while now.

This is what happens when politicians and junk science devotees are allowed to vote on a scientific or medical issue. If TSCA is actually tightened, expect many more such misadventures, whose effect will be a major drag on product innovation and our economy, with the loss of many safe and useful consumer products.

ACSH's Dr. Josh Bloom is more than a little familiar with the chemicals on the list. His amusing 2012 op-ed entitled Proposition Preposterous can be read here.