

# 4-MEI under attack again

By ACSH Staff — July 8, 2013

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<sup>[1]</sup> Those chemical alarmist groups are at it again, and as is so often the case, they are being aided and abetted by their pals in the regulatory state. Just before the long July 4th weekend, the anti-chemical activist group Center for Environmental Health [released a report](#) <sup>[2]</sup> asserting that Pepsi is continuing to sell soda made with 4-MEI (4-methylimidazole) despite it being added to the list of carcinogens regulated under California's Proposition 65. Although Pepsi products containing this carcinogen are no longer sold in California, products sold outside the state still contain 4-MEI. The group also highlights the fact that all Coca-Cola products even those sold outside California no longer contain this substance.

Although Pepsi is countering these attacks by saying that by February 2014, 4-MEI will no longer be on the ingredients list, there is really no reason related to public health for the removal, although of course having the benign colorant would require a warning label in California, thanks to the bizarre dictates of Prop 65. The addition of 4-MEI to that statute is based on studies showing that high-doses of the chemical administered to mice caused an increase in certain cancers.

Last year, FDA spokesman Douglas Karas pointed out that a person would have to drink more than a thousand cans of soda in a day to match the doses administered in studies that showed links to cancer in rodents.

ACSH's Dr. Elizabeth Whelan adds, The FDA's point the dose makes the poison, in essence remains as true today as ever, but try telling that to CSPI or the Prop 65 folks in California. We [countered](#) <sup>[3]</sup> this attack on 4-MEI when it was first raised by the chemophobes at the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI), the fear-mongering activist group, who first claimed that 4-MEI could cause cancer in humans. Mice are not little men, no matter how much these groups are trying to make consumers believe they are. And this reformulation is likely an extremely expensive undertaking. Who do you think is going to be paying for the removal of this harmless chemical from Pepsi products? We all are. It's a shame Pepsi had to comply with the ridiculous mandates in California.

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[1] [http://hsdispatch.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/72359\\_9546.jpg](http://hsdispatch.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/72359_9546.jpg)

[2] <http://www.businessweek.com/articles/2013-07-05/pepsi-plans-to-drop-disputed-cancer-chemical>

[3] <http://www.acsh.org/cspi-call-for-caramel-color-ban-is-artificially-flavored-with-misrepresented-science/>