

Integrated Chemicals Initiative in the Northeast

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Integrated Chemicals Approach

- ⚡ Changing nature of environmental protection
- ⚡ Historical focus on cleanup ? Current focus on controlling stacks, pipes, & waste ? Emerging focus on materials & products
- ⚡ Traditionally have a chemical-by-chemical approach to toxics
- ⚡ European influence/global marketplace
- ⚡ Precautionary principle

Problems with Current Approach to Chemicals

- ⚡ Challenge of addressing thousands of chemicals – inadequate tools & resources
- ⚡ Focus on materials & products requires a multi-pronged examination & action
- ⚡ Ineffective coordination among key players - research/data gathering, environmental regulatory, & public health authorities
- ⚡ Jurisdiction is multi-faceted & complex

What Do We Mean by Integrated Chemicals Program?

- ⚡ Integrated meaning bring more perspectives to the discussions/deliberations up front: environmental & health & safety regulatory authorities, toxicology researchers, public health authorities, & other as appropriate (i.e., agricultural, consumer product safety, fire safety, etc.)
- ⚡ Changing view/role of industry

What Do We Mean by Integrated Chemicals Program? *(continued)*

- ⚡ Integrated meaning developing better systems for bringing relevant information on chemical toxicity to all those authorities who need it in a timely fashion & in a format that is useful to them
- ⚡ Integrated meaning looking at opportunities to approach classes or groups of chemical & not just individual chemicals

Principles for Integrated Chemicals

- ⚡ Apply precautionary approach
- ⚡ Improved information & information sharing systems
- ⚡ Improved ability to utilize data & address uncertainties early
- ⚡ Improved inter-governmental coordination
- ⚡ Improved policies to address chemicals on a multi-chemical basis & to learn from past

Northeast Integrated Chemicals Initiative – Partners

- ⌘ Northeast – CT, MA, ME, NH, NJ, NY, RI, & VT; EPA Regions 1 & 2
- ⌘ NEWMOA, MA TURI, ME DEP, EPA Regions 1 & 2, NESCAUM, NEIWPC key partners in the project
- ⌘ Working closely with agencies in ME & MA & applying lessons learned to other states
- ⌘ EPA Regional Support – Critical

Northeast Integrated Chemicals Initiative (continued)

- ⌘ Focusing on improving interagency coordination & communication
- ⌘ Bringing together environmental officials, public health officials, & other key state authorities for workshops & meetings with a focus on emerging toxics issues, particularly BFRs

Northeast Integrated Chemicals Initiative (continued)

- ⌘ Successful regional workshop on HPV & other EPA initiatives – March 2004
- ⌘ Focusing now on state specific events
- ⌘ Need to build the inter-agency relationships to have a lasting integrated chemicals program
- ⌘ To engage in the integrated chemicals discussion, need specific focus

Why BFRs?

- ⌘ Brominated flame retardants are a complex group of chemicals where the focus is on the use in certain products & potential for exposure anywhere those products are used & environmental releases/exposures
- ⌘ Used to suppress fire – need to find safer & effective alternatives
- ⌘ Human health effects are unclear & all need to understand better

Workshop in ME- Summer 2004

- ⌘ Focus on Arsenic & BFRs in day-long session
- ⌘ Participation by public health, environmental agency, agriculture, fire safety, academic scientists, NGOs, & others
- ⌘ Reflected on past efforts to coordinate response to arsenic in groundwater & pressure treated wood

Workshop in ME (continued)

- ⌘ New toxicology research center formed at the University of Southern Maine, unique capacity/resource for the state
- ⌘ Strong interest in continuing ongoing exchanges & information sharing
- ⌘ Strong recognition of the value & importance of cross agency collaboration on toxics in ME
- ⌘ Ongoing interest in EPA data gathering

Workshop in MA – September 2004

- ⌘ Half day session focused on BFRs & interagency coordination
- ⌘ Participation by several environmental agencies, public health, NEIWPCC
- ⌘ Presentations on health effects of BFRs by BU Public Health School Researcher & alternatives by TURI

Workshop in MA *(continued)*

- ⌘ Strong interest in continuing to meet & share information on emerging toxics
- ⌘ Strong interest in trying to create interagency networking group to focus on toxics
- ⌘ Interest in following HPV, other EPA data gathering efforts, & developments in Europe

Next Steps in the Region

- ⌘ Discussing possible workshops in NH & VT
- ⌘ Discussing possible state workshops in NY & NJ with EPA Region 2
- ⌘ Planning a regional workshop in the spring to follow -up on interest in HPV & other EPA data gathering
- ⌘ Looking into a regional network to support ongoing electronic information sharing

Information on Toxicity is Key

- ⌘ Workshops to date demonstrated interest in HPV & other EPA data gathering efforts
- ⌘ Need to find effective ways to present data so it's useful for policy & program development – Key challenge
- ⌘ Need regular venues for sharing & discussing data & examining applications & implications – state specific & regional

Lesson Learned from Northeast Integrated Chemicals Initiative

- ⌘ Transition from waste to materials & products
- ⌘ European action driving interest in US
- ⌘ Markets playing a key role & not regulations
- ⌘ Not just environmental, link to occupational health, & consumer safety
- ⌘ Industry engagement is changing – need more constructive involvement

Progress Achieved

- ⌘ Building key relationships in ME & MA & learning how to do this
- ⌘ Learning more about interests & motivations across key agencies/authorities
- ⌘ Beginning to bring in academic researchers
- ⌘ Keeping agenda open & flexible

For more information

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