

When it comes to protecting you and your family, would you rather trust scientists or green activists?



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The wonders of chemistry are all around us. Without chemistry we would not have a house to live in or a car to drive, and there would be no televisions or DVDs, no computers, no clean water to drink, and no newspapers.

The function of many of the chemicals used today is to protect us from potential dangers and to enhance the safety of products for consumers – as examples, pharmaceuticals to protect our health, and flame retardants to prevent electrical equipment from bursting into flames.

Why you should be worried

One of these flame retardants, deca-BDE, is now the victim of a misguided but unfortunately successful campaign by supposedly “green” groups to ban the substance from electrical and electronic equipment from 1 July 2008. And politicians are giving in to their demands.

This, despite the fact that deca-BDE was not found to pose any risks after a 10-year risk assessment process carried out by the EU authorities. This assessment and its conclusions have been published and are freely accessible on the official website of the European Chemicals Bureau.

Worryingly, deca-BDE could be the first of a number of substances which are banned in the EU despite all evidence to the contrary. Such bans can endanger the lives of consumers whose products could in future contain substances for which we know much less and whose potential dangers have yet to be fully assessed.

Aren't you worried yet?

Many green NGOs apparently want to remove chemicals from electrical and electronic products – the very same chemicals which save many lives every year and which have been proven to be safe by the EU's official risk assessment process.

Does this give you cause for concern?

The Green Group in the European Parliament has said that “there should not be any primacy of science over policy-making.”

Think about this.

What the Greens are implying is that political interests, whether well-meaning or otherwise, automatically supercede scientific evidence. Hence in practice, a politician, elected for a 4 or 5 year mandate, is able to overrule the result of a 10-year risk assessment process!

Aren't you worried yet? You should be.

The REACHforLIFE campaign is calling for EU policy-making to be based on the results of detailed and extensive risk assessments carried out by the EU.

We believe it is wrong to:

- ban substances which have been demonstrably proven to be safe and
- impose the use of substances without having demonstrated that they are safe to use.

Given the considerable body of evidence demonstrating the safety of many flame retardants, it is negligent of these NGOs to call for the removal of a substance to achieve fire safety standards, thereby putting at risk the very people they purport to protect.

We urge decision-makers to take into account the result of official risk assessments when they debate restrictions on substances.

There should be no excuse for compromising or jeopardizing the safety of consumers without referral to the official EU risk assessment process.

Save yourself the worry. Trust in tried and tested chemicals.

About REACHforLIFE

REACHforLIFE is a campaign calling for EU political decision-making to be based on existing knowledge and scientific evidence. REACHforLIFE believes that the current trend in the EU of taking decisions based purely on political risk, with no reference to the EU's comprehensive and long-term risk assessment process, is not in the interests of the wider public and can lead to increased risk for consumers. REACHforLIFE believes that science should be at the core of political decision-making. REACHforLIFE was established in June 2008 and currently comprises Albemarle, Chemtura, and ICL-IP.

<http://www.reachforlife.eu>