



# BEYOND PESTICIDES

701 E Street, SE ■ Washington DC 20003  
202-543-5450 phone ■ 202-543-4791 fax  
info@beyondpesticides.org ■ www.beyondpesticides.org

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

July 7, 2008

Contact: Jay Feldman

Nichelle Harriott, 202-543-5450

## **Groups Tell EPA to Stop Widespread Uses of Anti-Bacterial Consumer Products**

*In comments to EPA on its new risk assessment and evaluation of the widely used anti-bacterial chemical triclosan, found in a wide range of products including soaps, toothpastes and personal care products, plastics, paints and clothing, public interest health and environmental groups point to health effects, environmental contamination and wildlife impacts and call for consumer uses to be halted.*

**Washington, DC, July 7, 2008** - In comments to be filed today with the Environmental Protection Agency, Beyond Pesticides, Food and Water Watch, Greenpeace US, Natural Resources Defense Council, Sierra Club and dozens of public health and environmental groups from the U.S. and Canada urge the agency to use its authority to cancel the non-medical uses of the antibacterial chemical triclosan, widely found in consumer products and shown to threaten health and the environment. The pesticide is found in a range of products from soaps, to toothpastes and personal care products, plastics, paints and clothing. Triclosan and its degradation products bioaccumulate in humans, is widely found in the nation's waterways, fish and aquatic organisms, and because of its proliferating uses, are linked to bacterial resistance, rendering triclosan and antibiotics ineffective for critical medical uses. The chemical and its degradates are also linked to endocrine disruption, cancer and dermal sensitization.

“The nonmedical uses of triclosan are frivolous and dangerous, creating serious direct health and environmental hazards and long-term health problems associated with the creation of resistant strains of bacteria,” said Jay Feldman, executive director of Beyond Pesticides. The American Medical Association (AMA) is on record questioning the efficacy of triclosan in consumer products, raising the question of whether the consumer uses are necessary and are doing more harm than good. The coalition of groups commenting today, in addition to the hazards cited, criticizes EPA for not completing an analysis of the impact of triclosan on endangered species and other deficiencies in its review.

The EPA's public comment period for the reevaluation of triclosan, known as the reregistration eligibility decision (RED), closes today. The document releases EPA's risk assessment and its decision to allow triclosan's uses to continue and expand. EPA shares responsibility for regulating triclosan with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). EPA has jurisdiction over treated textiles, paints and plastics and FDA is responsible for soaps, toothpaste, deodorants and antiseptics. The RED, however, is intended to assess the potential adverse effects across all uses.

In separate comments today, water utilities commented that triclosan and its degradation products are not cleaned out of the water treatment process and end up in sewage sludge, often referred to as biosolids. Research shows that earthworms take in triclosan residues, as do fish and aquatic organisms. Concerns have also been raised about residues in drinking water.

##