

May 24, 2018

Administrator Scott Pruitt  
US EPA Headquarters  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Pruitt,

As members of communities from across the country affected by trichloroethylene (TCE) exposure, we are writing to urge you to immediately finalize the proposed rules banning certain uses of TCE. TCE is a threat to public health for workers, consumers, and the millions of Americans whose water has been contaminated by the chemical. The science is clear, and delaying action is unacceptable.

In December 2016, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed banning a chemical for the first time in 27 years. That chemical was TCE as used as a spot cleaning agent in dry cleaning and as an aerosol spray degreaser. In January 2017, EPA proposed a second ban of TCE as used as a vapor degreaser. The agency estimated this ban alone would save millions of dollars based on reductions in cancer risks. But by December 2017, both proposed bans had been put in “long-term action” status by the EPA – effectively shelving them.

Every year, one hundred and seventy-two million pounds of TCE is produced in or imported into this country. It is highly toxic, and exposure to the chemical has a wide range of health impacts. According to the EPA, “TCE has the potential to affect the developing fetus, irritate the respiratory system and skin, and cause lightheadedness, drowsiness, and headaches. Repeated exposure to TCE has been associated with effects in the liver, kidneys, immune system, and central nervous system. Additionally, TCE has the potential to cause cancer in humans.”

TCE is established as a known human carcinogen by numerous authoritative bodies, including the National Toxicology Program (NTP), EPA’s Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS), and the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC). The carcinogenic chemical has been detected in the water supply of communities across the country. In fact, the EPA website says TCE is one of “the most frequently detected volatile organic chemicals (VOCs) in ground water in the United States.”

And people like us all over the country – from Arizona to North Carolina, from Indiana to Pennsylvania to Wyoming – are being exposed to TCE in our workplaces, our communities, and our homes.

We – the undersigned – are asking you to protect our families by finalizing the two proposed rules to ban certain uses of TCE today.

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