



News Release

Industry labelling proposal “too little, far too late”

VANCOUVER, April 2. The announcement by the Canadian Consumer Specialty Products Association (CCSPA) announcement that it will be launching an initiative to begin ingredient labelling on household products in 2010 is “too little, far too late,” the Labour Environmental Alliance Society (LEAS) said today.

“Canadians have been asking for not only ingredients, but also potential hazards to be labelled on household products,” said LEAS research coordinator Sean Griffin. “Now that governments at the provincial and federal level have been looking at right-to-know labelling legislation, the industry wants to appear as if it’s doing something.

“But it’s not enough and it doesn’t address Canadians’ right to know what potential toxic ingredients may be in household and other consumer products,” he said.

Griffin is the author of the popular CancerSmart Consumer Guide, which LEAS began publishing four years ago in response to consumers’ demand to know what potentially toxic — and undisclosed — ingredients were in products they use regularly. Many household products, such as paint strippers and moth repellent products, contain ingredients listed as carcinogenic by the International Agency for Research on Cancer.

Griffin said it is important the government take action to develop effective regulations. He said the initiative proposed by the CCSPA would omit potentially toxic ingredients, such as phthalates, from labelling (they would included under “fragrance”), and it would not identify potentially toxic ingredients, even though Canadians have made it clear they want such information on labels.

Polling conducted by LEAS in 2007 found that 93 per cent of respondents indicated they were in favour of hazard labelling on products.

LEAS executive director Mae Burrows also represented the public interest in a multi-stakeholder consultation with Health Canada on labelling last year. Several groups, including LEAS, the Canadian Environmental Law Association, Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment and the Canadian Cancer Society, issued a statement outlining their support for hazard labelling, while industry groups opposed it.

“We need government to enact right-to-know legislation that will require manufacturers to identify potentially hazardous ingredients in their products,” said Burrows. “Industry is not going to do it on its own and this latest initiative from CCSPA makes that clear.”

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