

Resolution on the Need for Strong Pulp and Paper Regulations

Whereas fish, wildlife, and humans in the Great Lakes ecosystem are being adversely affected by persistent toxic chemicals, particularly chlorine-related compounds including dioxin,

Recognizing the International Joint Commission, through the work of hundreds of researchers, has documented this threat, and has recommended action to the U.S. and Canadian governments to address it,

Noting the U.S. and Canadian governments have signed the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, which establishes a policy framework for action, including the goal of virtual elimination of persistent toxic compounds through a policy of zero discharge, and

Whereas U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's draft Dioxin Reassessment reports that dioxin is even more toxic than previously thought, is toxic in miniscule amounts, and targets the immune, reproductive and hormone systems of humans and animals exposed to it, and

Whereas the use of chlorine in pulp and paper mills creates unwanted byproducts, including dioxin, which are released into rivers and lakes, and which can build up in the food chain,

Whereas the U.S. EPA has acknowledged that people who depend on fishing in downstream communities are more at risk from pulp and paper effluent, and

Whereas people of color, and low income residents are more likely to be subsistence anglers downstream from pulp and paper mills, and

Whereas the President of the United States signed Executive Order 12898 requiring the U.S. EPA to consider disproportionate impacts on low income and minority populations, and

Whereas the U.S. EPA is poised to issue a rule allowing pulp and paper mills to use chlorine-dioxide to bleach paper products, a process which will inevitably result in persistent, toxic, and bioaccumulative byproducts in some quantity in the effluent, and thus in the downstream waters of communities with mills, and therefore in wildlife including fish,

Whereas alternatives to the use of chlorine in bleaching are available, and are currently being used by numerous mills, and

Recalling that Great Lakes United has endorsed the Sixth and Seventh

Biennial Reports of the IJC, including the following recommendations:

The Parties, in consultation with industry and other affected interests, alter production processes and feedstock chemicals so that dioxin, furan and hexachlorobenzene no longer result as byproducts...

The Parties, in consultation with industry and other affected interests, develop timetables to sunset the use of chlorine and chlorine-containing compounds as industrial feedstocks and that the means of reducing or eliminating other uses be examined.

Recalling also that Great Lakes United supports the phase out of the use of chlorinated compounds in the pulp and paper sector,

Remembering that Great Lakes United is committed to an orderly transition from a chlorine-based economy that minimizes dislocation and protects workers and communities through mechanisms outlined in Just Transition documents,

Therefore be it resolved that Great Lakes United:

- * Urges the International Joint Commission to advocate strongly with the U.S. EPA and Environment Canada to adopt strong rules to eliminate the discharge of persistent toxic compounds from pulp and paper mills
- * Urges the U.S. EPA and the President of the United States to adopt strong rules that will result in the adoption of chlorine-free bleaching technologies and the elimination of the discharge of persistent toxic substances
- * Urges consideration of job impacts in order to minimize any dislocation as a result of a move away from the use of chlorine as an industrial feedstock.

Submitted by the Clean Production Task Force, May 31, 1997

Approved by Great Lakes United Annual General Meeting, June 1, 1997

Resolution on the Need for Strong Medical Waste Regulations

Whereas fish, wildlife, and humans in the Great Lakes ecosystem are being adversely affected by persistent toxic chemicals, particularly chlorine-related compounds including dioxin,

Recognizing the International Joint Commission, through the work of hundreds of researchers, has documented this threat, and has recommended action to the U.S. and Canadian governments to address it,

Noting the U. S. and Canadian governments have signed the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, which establishes a policy framework for action, including the goal of virtual elimination of persistent toxic compounds through a policy of zero discharge,

Recognizing that the United States Environmental Protection Agency draft Dioxin Reassessment reports that dioxin is even more toxic than previously thought, is toxic in miniscule amounts, and targets the immune, reproductive and hormone systems of humans and animals exposed to it, and

Noting that the United States Environmental Protection Agency Dioxin Reassessment calculates that medical waste incinerators are the second largest known source of dioxin to the environment, and

Whereas the United States Environmental Protection Agency has acknowledged that small incinerators are unregulated and are likely important contributors to dioxin loading, and

Whereas medical waste incinerators are also among the largest contributors of anthropogenic mercury to the environment, and

Whereas the Environmental Protection Agency is poised to release medical waste regulations which may exempt small operators, which will not result in the elimination of the discharge of persistent toxic compounds including dioxin, and which do not encourage the development of a materials policy which will result in the elimination of persistent toxic compounds, and

Noting the U.S. EPA is empowered by the Clean Air Act to prohibit dioxin emissions, and

Whereas alternatives to incineration are well established, cost effective, safe and effective, and are used by many institutions, and

Whereas alternative products are available which do not create and release persistent toxic compounds when disposed, and

Recalling that Great Lakes United has endorsed the Sixth and Seventh Biennial Reports of the IJC, including the following recommendation:

The Parties, in consultation with industry and other affected interests, alter production processes and feedstock chemicals so that dioxin, furan and hexachlorobenzene no longer result as byproducts...

Therefore be it resolved that Great Lakes United:

- Urges the International Joint Commission to advocate strongly with the U.S. EPA and Environment Canada to adopt strong rules which eliminate the discharge of persistent toxic compounds from medical waste incinerators,
- Urges the International Joint Commission to advocate for and work with the health care industry to adopt a materials policy which will lead to zero discharge of persistent toxic compounds, and
- Urges the U.S. EPA to adopt strong rules to eliminate the formation of dioxin and the release of mercury by medical waste incinerators, and to encourage the health care industry to adopt a materials policy which will lead to zero discharge of persistent toxic substances.

Submitted by the Clean Production Task Force, May 31, 1997

Approved by Great Lakes United Annual General Meeting, June 1, 1997