



For Immediate Release

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Delegates Decision Prolongs Toxic Pollution

(Geneva, Switzerland) Government delegates to a committee of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) have failed again to take urgent action on a group of harmful toxic chemicals, known as short-chain chlorinated paraffins (SCCPs) and instead have postponed the decision for another three years at least, thus continuing the global contamination of the environment, wildlife and humans with these harmful chemicals.

SCCPs are a group of industrial chemicals used as lubricants in small scale metal cutting, exposing unsuspecting workers, as well as people and wildlife in areas near and far away from their point of release. They are also used in drilling fluids by the expanding gas industry, at a time when the polluting process of hydraulic fracturing for natural (unconventional) gas is vastly increasing worldwide.

The risks posed by SCCPs to human health and the environment were identified 6 years ago. In 2006, Convention delegates recognised that SCCPs show high persistence in the environment; the capability to bioaccumulate in tissues of living organisms such that they have been found in human breast milk; the potential for serious effects on humans such as causing cancer, liver and thyroid damage, and other toxic environmental effects; and the potential to travel long distances and reach regions where they have never been used.

SCCPs have been found in the Arctic and contaminate beluga whales as well as seals and walrus, which threaten the Indigenous Peoples of the Arctic, as they are intimately reliant on the marine environment for their physical, cultural, and spiritual sustenance¹.

Several countries have already stopped production or restricted the use of SCCPs, and the EU has banned SCCPs under an amendment to its POPs Regulation. In contrast, Chinese production of SCCPs has increased by 30-fold in less than 20 years. It is opposition from countries like Japan and China, where SCCPs are still produced, that is blocking the regulation of SCCPs, and the resulting delay is inconsistent with the Convention's objective to protect human health and the environment.

The undersigned health and environmental organisations therefore call on the European Commission and Member States to do their utmost to ensure that SCCPs are listed in the Stockholm Convention for global elimination as swiftly as possible.

¹ As the Inuit Circumpolar Council has stated, the presence of SCCPs in the breast milk of Inuit women in northern Canada also is cause for concern and provides further justification for global action. See Intervention by Pamela Miller, Executive Director of Alaska Community Action on Toxics, at the current POPRC meeting.

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NOTES:

The European Union initiated consideration of international measures under the Stockholm Convention. The Persistent Organic Pollutant Review Committee (POPRC) has been deliberating about moving SCCPs to the next stage of assessment on the path to a global ban for several years. The discussion and decisions have been taken at POPRC's 8th meeting in Geneva, and the outcome of this meeting has relegated the decision to the 2015 meeting of the Committee (POPRC11). This effectively means that a decision to list SCCPs under the Convention is postponed for at least another 5 years (COP8 in 2017), because the next Committee meets in 3 years time; one additional year would be taken to assess SCCPs according to the Socio-economic Annex F, and another additional year to be approved at the Conference of the Parties.

SCCPs are mainly used as metal-working fluids and fat liquoring of leather, with other major uses being in paints, coatings and sealants and as flame-retardants in rubber and textiles. The main sources of inputs to the sea are therefore production sites for SCCPs and products containing them and metal-, leather- and rubberworking-sites where they are used.

SCCPs' potential effects on human health include cancer and disorders of the immune and reproductive systems as well as hormone disrupting properties. SCCPs are also involved with serious adverse effects in animals, such as endocrine disruption, reproductive dysfunction, behavioural abnormalities, birth defects, disturbance of the immune system and extinction of whole populations, among others.

The Decision of the Review Committee that SCCPs meet the criteria of being a POP.

[Decision POPRC-2/8: Short-chained chlorinated paraffins](#)

Stockholm Convention documentation on SCCPs

<http://chm.pops.int/Convention/POPsReviewCommittee/Chemicals/tabid/243/Default.aspx>

Draft Risk Profile on Short-chain chlorinated paraffins

<http://chm.pops.int/Convention/POPsReviewCommittee/POPRCMeetings/POPRC8/POPRC7WorkingDocuments/tabid/2801/Default.aspx>

SCCPs on the EU REACH Candidate list: <http://echa.europa.eu/candidate-list-table/-/substance/241/search/+/del/75/col/INCLUSIONDATECL/type/desc/pre/2/view>

Recommendation from the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) to include SCCPs in the Authorisation list: http://echa.europa.eu/documents/10162/13640/annex_xiv_subst_inclusion_en.pdf

Opinion of the European Chemicals Agency Member State Committee on the draft recommendation of the priority substances and annex XIV entries:

http://echa.europa.eu/documents/10162/13576/opinion_draft_recommendation_annex_xiv_en.pdf

Commission decision of 20 April 2010 on the re-examination of the restriction concerning short-chain chlorinated paraffins (SCCPs) listed in Annex XVII to (REACH) Regulation (EC) No 1907/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2010:100:0015:0016:en:PDF>

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