



Styrene Information and Research Center (SIRC)

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Styrene Industry Will Contest Vigorously the Unwarranted Listing of Styrene in 12th Report on Carcinogens

(The Styrene Information and Research Center (SIRC) issued the following statement today on behalf of the U.S. styrene industry in response to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' listing on June 10, 2011 of styrene in its 12th *Report on Carcinogens (RoC)* as a substance that is "reasonably anticipated to be a human carcinogen." HHS publishes the *RoC* under congressional mandate. This statement may be attributed in whole or in part to SIRC Executive Director Jack Snyder)

ARLINGTON, Va. June 10, 2011 – "The U.S. styrene industry will contest vigorously the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS's) listing of styrene in its 12th *Report on Carcinogens* because the designation is completely unjustified by the latest science and resulted from a flawed process that focuses on only those data that support a cancer concern, and in the case of styrene ignored the preponderance of data that fail to suggest a cancer concern for this substance.

"HHS included styrene in the 12th *RoC* despite the fact that European Union regulators have determined that styrene does not represent a human cancer concern. E.U. scientists reviewed the full styrene database, weighing all of the available data in reaching their conclusion.

"Moreover, the NTP's own language acknowledges how weaknesses in its approach could lead to public misinterpretation of the meaning of an *RoC* listing: 'It is important to note that the reports do not present quantitative assessments of carcinogenic risk... **Listing in the report does not establish that such substances present a risk to persons in their daily lives.**'¹ In plain language, this statement means that NTP has not concluded that styrene presents an actual human cancer risk, or a risk from any of the thousands of products made with styrene.

"On May 11, 63 members of the U.S. House of Representatives – 47 Republicans and 16 Democrats -- wrote HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius asking her to delay the *RoC* listing of styrene pending a thorough review that weighs *the full body of scientific evidence*.

"New science that has emerged since the E.U.'s 2007 Risk Assessment Report points even further away from a cancer concern. The peer-reviewed *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine* in 2009 published

¹ National Toxicology Program, Questions and Answers about the *RoC*, "What does a listing in the *RoC* mean?," <http://ntp.niehs.nih.gov/index.cfm?objectid=03CA6383-9766-1F64-6637241FE0114FE9>

a comprehensive review² showing that the ‘available evidence does not support a causal relationship between styrene exposure and any type of human cancer.’

“That study’s lead author, Dr. Paolo Boffetta of the Mount Sinai School of Medicine’s Institute for Translational Epidemiology, told us recently: ‘We performed a thorough review of recent data on cancer risk among workers exposed to styrene and reached the conclusion that these data do not support the notion that styrene exposure causes cancer in humans. In my view there is no scientific basis to classify styrene as a human carcinogen.’

“Recently, the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) issued a critique that identified significant flaws in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s Integrated Risk Information System review of formaldehyde. The NTP’s styrene review suffers from very similar deficiencies. The styrene industry, which has protested the NTP listing with federal officials since it was proposed in 2008, will continue to press its case that styrene should be withdrawn from the report because it does not represent a human cancer concern.

“We are very disappointed that the NTP failed to address the styrene industry’s and Congress’ legitimate concerns about the process and in the end came to a scientifically unsupportable and possibly preordained conclusion to list styrene in the *Report on Carcinogens*. On May 26, we notified HHS legal counsel of our intent to file for preliminary injunction should styrene be listed in the report. The styrene industry will continue its advocacy to get styrene removed from the *RoC* and is contemplating seeking an NAS review of the NTP styrene review.

“What is important to know is that this unwarranted listing changes nothing about the safety of consumers who every day use some of the thousands of different products³ made from styrene, employees at companies that manufacture styrene or styrene-based products, or people in the communities in which these companies operate. What this scientifically bankrupt decision does mean, unfortunately, is that some 750,000 good jobs at more than 3,000 small- and medium-sized U.S. manufacturing facilities all across the country are put at risk for no valid reason in a time of economic uncertainty.

“While the World Health Organization’s International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) and the CDC’s Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) respectively have determined that styrene is a ‘possible’ or ‘weak’ carcinogen, their classifications indicate a much lower level of concern than NTP’s proposed ‘reasonably anticipated’ carcinogen listing. Neither the IARC nor ATSDR classifications trigger extra workplace precautions or warning labels; these classifications do not unnecessarily frighten employees, neighbors, or consumers.”

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(Note to Editors: Find out more about the Styrene Information and Research Center, this topic and styrene in general by visiting the SIRC Web site, www.styrene.org.)

² “Epidemiologic Studies on Styrene and Cancer: A Review of the literature” by Dr. Paolo Boffetta of the International Prevention Research Institute, Lyon, France, and colleagues is available by request to SIRC communications advisor Joe Walker, walkercom2@aol.com or 703-491-3301; the review was supported by SIRC.

³ Styrene-based materials, including polystyrene, ABS, styrene-butadiene rubber, styrene-butadiene latex and styrene composites are used to make a wide variety of products that extend the life of transportation infrastructure, increase fuel economy, protect our troops, produce “green” energy, increase consumer safety, prevent pollution, save lives, and improve sports.