

NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Industry Maintains Sewer Vote Was Misguided *Economic Impact on Toronto Predicted*

(June 26, 2000) – North American producers of certain compounds commonly found in household and industrial products have expressed serious concern over the June 9 vote of Toronto’s City Council to approve a revised Sewer Use By-Law. Some of the discharge limits established in the By-Law ignored the best available science and would not benefit public health or the environment. They would, however, impose costly burdens on the local business community, particularly small businesses.

Industry’s objection to the vote is based on four fundamental issues:

1. Arbitrary discharge limits were set without scientific justification that real health or environmental benefits will result;
2. Arbitrary discharge limits were set that will cost Canadian companies and consumers millions of dollars;
3. Inadequate consultation with major industrial stakeholders and over reliance on the input of one special interest group; and
4. Mandatory pollution prevention planning without consideration or understanding of the consequences to Toronto businesses.

“This By-Law represents an inappropriate commitment of City resources to implement and enforce a bureaucratic pollution prevention program that will not significantly improve environmental quality or human health in Toronto,” said Barbara Losey of the Alkylphenols & Ethoxylates Research Council. “It forces prescriptive pollution prevention planning and onerous discharge limits that are completely out of step with other North American cities.”

In revising the By-Law discharge limits, Toronto’s Works Committee relied solely on the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) for technical guidance. “It appears that WWF drafted the by-law, answered most of the questions about the by-law, and continued to steer the by-law during Works Committee meetings,” noted R. J. Hayward, Vice President of Operations at the Rohm and Haas Plant in West Hill, Ontario.

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If the affected industries had been consulted, the Works Committee would have discovered that there is overwhelming support for pollution prevention and that many companies engage in voluntary programs as good environmental stewards. Hayward noted that “the Committee has shunned a golden opportunity to demonstrate Toronto’s interest in working with industry to maintain and create jobs as part of the growth and prosperity of the city.”

Some companies that use the organic compounds targeted by the Sewer Use By-Law have indicated that the City Council’s decision will force them to relocate to other parts of Canada, rely on production facilities in the United States or even close their operations. This is a high price for Toronto to pay for restricting compounds that do not compromise environmental quality or public safety when managed responsibly.

For more information on nonylphenol and its ethoxylates, a class of compounds targeted by the Sewer Use By-Law, please visit the Alkylphenols & Ethoxylates Research Council web site at www.aperc.org.

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