

News Release

HARPER GOVERNMENT TAKES ACTION FOR CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY

Oct. 3, 2011

For immediate release

Ottawa, Ontario – The Government of Canada today announced the renewal of its commitment to protect Canadian families and consumers by updating Canada’s world-leading Chemicals Management Plan.

“As a mom, I want to know that every product I give to my family and use in my house is safe,” said Canada’s Health Minister Leona Aglukkaq. “We know our consumer protection policies are already at work for Canadians. In fact, a science-based study concluded BPA was harmful to human health and the environment, so it was banned from baby bottles.”

“Today’s announcement is both an investment in the health of the Canadian economy and our environment,” said Environment Minister Peter Kent. “Canadians want to have confidence in the products they use everyday, and reassurance that they are not harmful to the environment.

“We see this plan as a continuation of Canada’s world-leading initiatives in this area and it will ensure the protection of Canadians’ health and safety, and their environment. We have and will continue to work proactively with the government as the plan is implemented,” said Shannon Coombs, President, Canadian Consumer Specialty Products Association.

The Chemicals Management Plan was originally launched by the Prime Minister Harper in 2006. Today’s announcement provides funding for the next phase of the Plan, which will focus on:

- Further improving product safety in Canada;
- Completing assessments of 500 substances across nine categories including phthalates, primarily used in plastics; and,
- Investing in additional research for substances like Bisphenol A, flame retardants, substances that affect hormone function and substances that affect the environment.



Approximately 1,000 additional substances will also be addressed in the next five years through other initiatives, including rapid screening of substances which pose little or no risk.

More information on the Chemicals Management Plan is available at www.chemicalsubstances.gc.ca.

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Background Information

In 2006, the Harper Government launched the Chemicals Management Plan to strengthen efforts to help protect Canadian families and the environment from the risks of harmful chemicals. Jointly delivered by Environment Canada and Health Canada, the Chemicals Management Plan identifies and addresses environmental and health risks under various federal laws such as the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999*, the *Pest Control Products Act*, the *Canada Consumer Product Safety Act*, and the *Food and Drugs Act*.

The Government of Canada is providing more than \$506 million in funding over five years for the next phase of Chemicals Management Plan. Activities in the next phase include:

- Improving product safety in Canada;
- Completing assessments of 500 substances across nine categories including phthalates, primarily used in plastics; and,
- Investing in additional research for chemicals like Bisphenol A, flame retardants, chemicals that affect hormone function and chemicals that affect the environment.

The Chemicals Management Plan has made Canada a world leader in chemicals management. Canada was the first country in the world to take action to prohibit the importation, sale and advertising of baby bottles that contain BPA. Other key activities include the addition of 22 substances to the Cosmetic Ingredient Hotlist; prohibiting the manufacture, use, sale, offer for sale and import of products containing perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS) – which was used as a stain repellent on clothing, furniture and other consumer products; and introducing voluntary agreements with industry to eliminate harmful chemicals in products sold in Canada, such as perfluorocarboxylic acids (PFCAs) – used to repel water, oil and grease on paper, textiles, carpets and leather.

The Canadian Health Measures Survey was also established as a major national biomonitoring program under the Chemicals Management Plan. The first cycle of this survey measured the exposure of Canadians to 81 key environmental chemicals. Results will be used to track long-term trends in Canada. Research in the next five years will continue to focus on the effects of harmful chemicals on infants and children, pregnant women and the environment.

The Chemicals Management Plan is part of a larger plan to make the marketplace safer for consumers. The Canada Consumer Product Safety Act came into force on June 20, 2011 and gives the Government stronger and more modern legislative powers to help protect Canadians from unreasonably hazardous consumer products. The Government now has the power to recall unreasonably dangerous products from store shelves.

The Chemicals Management Plan also enables the Government of Canada to successfully take actions to control chemicals to reduce harmful effects in our air, soil and water. This leads to a healthier, cleaner, and safer environment for Canadians, and for Canada's wildlife.