

25 May 2007

MEPs reject Green amendments and adopt science-based approach to TBBPA in EQS Directive on water policy

The European Parliament has endorsed the use of a science-based approach to regulating environmental quality standards (EQS) in water policy.

In doing so, MEPs rejected any mention of the brominated flame retardant TBBPA from the introductory paragraphs of the Directive – and, in a vote on 22 May 2007, rejected Green amendments attempting to classify another BFR, Deca-BDE, as a priority hazardous substance.

TBBPA continues to have no restriction on its use by industry, the EQS focussing only on limiting emissions of substances as opposed to restricting their use.

However, MEPs adopted an amendment to the Annex which included a list of 28 new substances – one of which being TBBPA – and has asked the European Commission to review the list in 2009.

Following the vote, EBFRIP Chair Veronique Steukers said: *"We welcome the deletion of the reference to TBBPA in the recital of the Directive, as well as the rejection of the two amendments attempting to include Deca-BDE as priority hazardous substance. TBBPA is still going through the EU Risk Assessment and we still believe, therefore, that it shouldn't be included in the Annex of the EQS Directive."*

The bromine industry has instituted a voluntary programme to reduce emissions of brominated flame retardants to the environment, including TBBPA. The Voluntary Emissions Control Action Programme (VECAP), a major Responsible Care® commitment from manufacturers of BFRs, has been operating since 2004. To date, 89% in volume of TBBPA additive customers in Europe have already committed to the programme.

The EQS Directive is co-decision legislation, so the European Commission and Member States must still take a position on the Parliament's proposed amendments.