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EPA CHILDREN'S HEALTH PROGRAM REPORTS MAJOR PROGRESS *BSEF Members Support Voluntary Initiative*

Washington, D.C. (Sept. 19, 2005) – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has released its initial report on the first six of 20 chemicals being reviewed under the Voluntary Children's Chemical Evaluation Program (VCCEP). EPA's review of the findings of an independent panel of experts confirmed that the industry-sponsored assessments were rigorous and thorough.

The Bromine Science and Environmental Forum (BSEF), an industry group comprised of the manufacturers of brominated flame retardants, supports the EPA's pilot program as an important way to develop objective scientific information with which the public can better understand potential risks to children associated with certain chemical exposures.

"Flame retardants provide clear fire safety benefits, especially for children, and the public and policy makers need to have objective information about these products in order to determine appropriate consumer choices and public policy decisions," said Dr. Raymond B Dawson, Chairman of BSEF. "One of the greatest challenges we face today is separating fact from fiction, particularly with regard to scientific information, and this important EPA program helps us see and understand the facts."

Under VCCEP, 20 chemicals are being examined through a series of tiered screens and tests to assess whether potential risks to children have been appropriately characterized and, if not, what additional data are needed. In today's decisions, EPA agreed with the manner and rigor with which independent scientific panels reviewed industry data submissions, and said that the process for characterizing the potential risk to children's health from three of the six chemicals currently under review has been completed. For three others, including the brominated flame retardant decabromodiphenyl ether (Deca-BDE), additional data is needed in order to complete the assessment process.

"Requesting Tier II-type data is a normal part of the progression of evaluating a chemical such as Deca-BDE," Dawson said, "Although Deca-BDE is already the most thoroughly evaluated flame retardant on the market today, we are prepared to work with the EPA and others in industry to develop the information needed to update and refine those previous assessments."

More than 35 chemical makers have volunteered to sponsor chemicals in the VCCEP pilot by collecting and submitting hazard and exposure data for review. A panel of scientific experts then reviews the data and determines whether sufficient information exists for characterizing potential risk to children's health. EPA also reviews the data, and consults with program and regional officers, before determining whether additional data is needed.

BSEF is the international organization of the bromine chemical industry, whose remit is to inform stakeholders and commission science on brominated chemicals such as flame retardants.



The chemicals involved in today's announcement are vinylidene chloride (VDC), acetone, methyl ethyl ketone (MEK), and penta-, octa- and deca- bromodiphenyl ether (BDE).

More information on the VCCEP is available at <http://www.epa.gov/chemrtk/vccep/> and <http://www.tera.org/peer/VCCEP/VCCEPIntroduction.html>.

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