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Government of Canada Takes Action on Another Chemical of Concern: Bisphenol A

News Release

April 18, 2008

For immediate release

OTTAWA - The Honourable Tony Clement, Minister of Health, and the Honourable John Baird, Minister of the Environment, today announced that the Government is taking action to protect the health of Canadians and the environment from another chemical of concern.

Canada is the first country in the world to complete a risk assessment of bisphenol A in consultation with industry and other stakeholders, and to initiate a 60 day public comment period on whether to ban the importation,

sale and advertising of polycarbonate baby bottles which contain bisphenol A.

The comment period will begin on April 19, 2008, once the Government publishes a summary notice of its assessment findings in Canada Gazette, Part 1.

"Canada has been the first country in the world to conduct risk assessments on a number of chemicals of concern, as a result of a new initiative announced by the Prime Minister on December 8, 2006 known as the Chemicals Management Plan," said Minister Clement. "We have immediately taken action on bisphenol A, because we believe it is our responsibility to ensure families, Canadians and our environment are not exposed to a potentially harmful chemical."

Health Canada's screening assessment of bisphenol A primarily focused on its impacts on newborns and infants up to 18 months of age, however health risks for Canadians of all ages were considered in the screening.

It was determined that the main source of exposure for newborns and infants is through the use of polycarbonate baby bottles when they are exposed to high temperatures and the migration of bisphenol A from cans into infant formula. The scientists concluded in this assessment that bisphenol A exposure to newborns and infants is below levels that may pose a risk, however, the gap between exposure and effect is not large enough.

To be prudent, the Government of Canada is proposing to reduce bisphenol A exposure in infants and newborns by proposing a number of actions: to ban polycarbonate baby bottles; to develop stringent migration targets for bisphenol A in infant formula cans; to work with industry to

develop alternative food packaging and develop a code of practice; and to list bisphenol A under Schedule 1 of the Canadian Environmental Protection Act.

Environment Canada scientists also found that at low levels, bisphenol A can harm fish and aquatic organisms over time. Studies indicate that it can currently be found in wastewater and sludge treatment plants.

"When it comes to Canada's environment, you can't put a price on safety," said Minister Baird. "Not only are we finding out about the health impacts of bisphenol A, but the environmental impacts as well. That's why our Government will be moving forward and will work with the provinces and stakeholders to keep bisphenol A out of our environment, and take the necessary measures to ensure its safe use and disposal."

For more information, please visit the Chemical's Management Web site (<http://www.chemicalsubstanceschimiques.gc.ca>) or call 1-866-891-4542.

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