

THE COMMONS PRINCIPLES FOR ALTERNATIVES ASSESSMENT

Addressing Chemicals of Concern to Human Health or the Environment

In October 2012, a group of 26 environmental health scientists, advocates, funders and policy makers met in Boston, Massachusetts for two days of meetings entitled **Building a Chemical Commons: Data Sharing, Alternatives Assessment and Communities of Practice**. One of the key outcomes of this meeting was an agreement regarding the need for a common definition and set of principles for chemicals alternatives assessment. Following this meeting, a subcommittee met over four months in 2013 to refine a consensus set of principles. These principles were based on earlier foundational work by the Lowell Center for Sustainable Production, the Massachusetts Toxics Use Reduction Institute, the Environmental Defense Fund, and the BizNGO Working Group. These principles are now available to be shared and used in framing discussions about alternatives assessment and to guide decision making about safer chemical use.

Alternatives Assessment is a process for identifying, comparing and selecting safer alternatives* to chemicals of concern (including those in materials, processes or technologies) on the basis of their hazards, performance, and economic viability. A primary goal of Alternatives Assessment is to reduce risk to humans and the environment by identifying safer choices.

These Principles for Alternatives Assessment are designed to guide a process for well informed decision making that supports successful phase out of hazardous products, phase in of safer substitutes and elimination of hazardous chemicals where possible.

REDUCE HAZARD Reduce hazard by replacing a chemical of concern with a less hazardous alternative. This approach provides an effective means to reduce risk associated with a product or process if the potential for exposure remains the same or lower. Consider reformulation to avoid use of the chemical of concern altogether.

MINIMIZE EXPOSURE Assess use patterns and exposure pathways to limit exposure to alternatives that may also present risks.

USE BEST AVAILABLE INFORMATION Obtain access to and use information that assists in distinguishing between possible choices. Before selecting preferred options, characterize the product and process sufficiently to avoid choosing alternatives that may result in unintended adverse consequences.

REQUIRE DISCLOSURE AND TRANSPARENCY Require disclosure across the supply chain regarding key chemical and technical information. Engage stakeholders throughout the assessment process to promote transparency in regard to alternatives assessment methodologies employed, data used to characterize alternatives, assumptions made and decision making rules applied.

RESOLVE TRADE-OFFS Use information about the product's life cycle to better understand potential benefits, impacts, and mitigation options associated with different alternatives. When substitution options do not provide a clearly preferable solution, consider organizational goals and values to determine appropriate weighting of decision criteria and identify acceptable trade-offs.

TAKE ACTION Take action to eliminate or substitute potentially hazardous chemicals. Choose safer alternatives that are commercially available, technically and economically feasible, and satisfy the performance requirements of the process/product. Collaborate with supply chain partners to drive innovation in the development and adoption of safer substitutes. Review new information to ensure that the option selected remains a safer choice.

* "Safer Alternative: An option, including the option of not continuing an activity, that is healthier for humans and the environment than the existing means of meeting that need. For example, safer alternatives to a particular chemical may include a chemical substitute or a re-design that eliminates the need for any chemical addition." From Tickner, J. and Eliason, P. *Alternatives Assessment for Chemicals: From Problem-Evaluation to Solutions-Assessment and Implementation: A background paper created expressly for use in the March 31-April 1, 2011 Interagency Discussion on Alternatives Assessment*, EPA Potomac Yards Conference Facility, Crystal City, VA. March 24, 2011

SIGNATORIES OF THE COMMONS PRINCIPLES FOR ALTERNATIVES ASSESSMENT

Kate Anderson, MA, Director of Education, Beyond Benign

Anne-Sofie Andersson, Graduate Chemist, Director, ChemSec

Tammy L. Ayers, Manager, Materials Chemistry Strategy & Practice, Global Environmental Sustainability, Steelcase, Inc.

Jamie Bainbridge, Director, Textile Development & Sustainability, NAU

Kate Bailey, Program Developer, Eco-Cycle, Inc.

Susan Baker, EdM, President, Shareholder Advocacy & Corporate Engagement, Trillium Asset Management, LLC

Indira Balkissoon, MS, VP, Techlaw, Inc.

Davis Baltz, MS, Precautionary Principle Project Director, Commonweal

Patricia Beattie, PhD, DABT, VP, SciVera, LLC

Mike Belliveau, Executive Director, Environmental Health Strategy Center

Anthony Bernheim, FAIA, LEED Fellow, Principal, Bernheim + Dean, Inc.

Libby Bernick, PE, LEED AP BD+C, Sr VP, TruCost

Alan Best, MBA, FCIIPD, Managing Director, Alan Best Sustainability Limited

Ann Blake, PhD, Environmental & Public Health Consulting

Gregory D. Blake, MBA, Director, Strategic Development, Biosynthetic Technologies

Charlotte Brody, RN, Director of Chemicals & Green Chemistry, BlueGreen Alliance

Janet Brown, EDAC, Director, Facility Engagement, Practice Greenhealth; Director, Content & Outreach, Healthier Hospitals Initiative

Michael S. Brown, PhD, Principal, Brown & Wilmanns Environmental, LLC

Eden Brukman, Technical Director, Health Product Declaration Collaborative

Amy Cannon, PhD, Executive Director, Beyond Benign

Lin Kaatz Chary, PhD, MPH, Consultant, Great Lakes Green Chemistry Network

Sue Chiang, MPH, MPP, Co-Director, Pollution Prevention, Center for Environmental Health

Barry A. Cik, Board Certified Environmental Engineer, Co-Founder, Naturepedic

James Clark, PhD, Professor of Chemistry, University of York

Stacia Clinton, RD, LDN, Healthy Food in Health Care Coordinator, Health Care Without Harm

Bradley Hugh Colton, MBA, Strategic Projects, Global Procurement, Global Operations Services, Marriott International, Inc.

Caroline Cox, MA, Research Director, Center for Environmental Health

Holly Davies, PhD, Sr Toxicologist, Washington State Department of Ecology

Mia Davis, MA, VP, Beautycounter

Joseph DiGangi, PhD, Sr Science & Technical Advisor, IPEN

Tracey Easthope, MPH, Director, Environmental Health Project, Ecology Center

Sally Edwards, ScD, Sr Research Associate, Lowell Center for Sustainable Production

Pam Eliason, MS, Industry Research Program Manager, Sr Associate Director, Massachusetts Toxics Use Reduction Institute

James Ewell, MA, Director, Sustainable Materials, GreenBlue

Ken Geiser, PhD, Professor Emeritus, University of Massachusetts Lowell

Rachel Gibson, JD, MPP, Director, Safer Chemicals Program, Health Care Without Harm

Michael Green, MS, MPP, Center for Environmental Health

Tim Greiner, MBA, MA, Co-Founder, Managing Director, Pure Strategies

Joshua A. Grice, MPA, Research Analyst, Reducing Toxic Threats Initiative, Washington State Department of Ecology

Robin Guenther FAIA, LEED AP, Sustainable Healthcare Design Leader, Perkins+Will

Helen Gyger, Marketing & Research Development Specialist, DesignTex

Sonja Haider, FA, Business & Investors Advisor, ChemSec

Ronald Hart, PhD, Former Director, National Center for Toxicological Research, US Food and Drug Administration

Eric Harrington, MS, Principal, Green Advantage Consultants

Michelle Mauthe Harvey, MBA, Sr Manager, Retail, Environmental Defense Fund

Magnus Hedenmark, MS, Chief Sustainability Officer, Coresource AB

Lauren Heine, PhD, Co-Director, Clean Production Action

Helen Holder, MS, Corporate Materials Selection Manager, Hewlett-Packard

Jeff Hughes, Manager, Sustainability & Environmental Stewardship, Seattle Children's Hospital

Jessica Iclisoy, Founder, California Baby

Alastair Iles, PhD, Associate Director, Policy & Law, Berkeley Center for Green Chemistry; Assistant Professor, Environmental Science, Policy and Management, University of California Berkeley

Molly Jacobs, MPH, Senior Research Associate, Lowell Center for Sustainable Production

Bob Kerr, MA, Principal, Co-Founder, Pure Strategies

Susan Klosterhaus, PhD, MPH, Sr Scientist, Cradle to Cradle Products Innovation Institute

Frank Knapp Jr., President & CEO, South Carolina Small Business Chamber of Commerce

Steve Kooy, LEED AP ID+C, Global Sustainability Manager, Haworth, Inc.

Ally LaTourelle, Esq, JD, Partner, BioEconomy Partners, LLC

Tom Lent, Policy Director, Healthy Building Network

David Levine, Co-Founder, CEO, American Sustainable Business Council

Nancy Linde, MS, Toxicologist, NSF International

Richard A. Liroff, PhD, Executive Director, Investor Environmental Health Network

Raymond Lizotte, Director, IT Environmental Stewardship Office, Schneider Electric

Susan Lyons, President, DesignTex

Timothy Malloy, JD, Professor of Law, Faculty Director, Sustainable Technology & Policy Program, University of California Los Angeles

Roger McFadden, VP, Sr Scientist, Staples, Inc.

Bryan McGannon, Deputy Director, Policy & Engagement, American Sustainable Business Council

Teresa L. McGrath, Supervising Toxicologist, Green Chemistry Programs, NSF International

Ben Mead, Textile Sustainability Specialist, Textile Exchange

Elise Miller, MEd, Director, The Collaborative on Health & the Environment

Samuel B. Moore, PhD, Managing Director, Hohenstein Institute America, Inc.

Martin Mulvihill, PhD, Associate Director, Education & Outreach, Berkeley Center for Green Chemistry; Chemist, Center for Occupational & Environmental Health, University of California Berkeley

Mark Newton, VP, CSR & Sustainability, Timberland

Dara O'Rourke, PhD, Associate Professor, University of California Berkeley; Co-Founder, GoodGuide

Brian Penttila, PhD, Chemical Engineer, Pacific Northwest Pollution Prevention Resource Center

Jerry Poje, PhD, Founding Board Member, US Chemical Safety & Hazard Investigation Board

Colin Price, MA, Director, Research & Market Innovation, Oregon Environmental Council

Rui Resendes, PhD, President, GreenCenter USA

Paul Richard, Sustainability Director, Warner Babcock Institute for Green Chemistry

Joseph P. Rinkevich, MA, Founder, President, SciVera, LLC

Jonathan M. Rivin, PhD, Waste Management Specialist, Solid & Hazardous Waste Education Center, University of Wisconsin

Per Rosander, Director, EnviroAction

Christine Rosen, PhD, Associate Director, Business & Economics, Berkeley Center for Green Chemistry; Associate Professor, Haas Business and Public Policy Group, University of California Berkeley

Mark Rossi, PhD, Co-Director, Clean Production Action

Tatiana Santos, Sr Policy Officer, Chemicals & Nanotechnology, European Environmental Bureau

Jennifer Sass, PhD, Senior Scientist, Natural Resource Defence Council

Ted Schettler, MD, MPH, Science Director, Science & Environmental Health Network

Julie Schoenung, PhD, Professor, Department of Chemical Engineering & Materials Science, University of California Davis

Megan Schwarzman, MD, MPH, Environmental Health Scientist, Center for Occupational & Environmental Health, University of California Berkeley

Greg Scott, Materials Development & Sourcing Manager, Mountain Equipment Co-op

Ted Smith, Coordinator, International Campaign for Responsible Technology

Jan D. Stensland, LEED AP BD+C ID+C, Inside Matters

Fran Teplitz, Director, Social Investing & Policy, Green America

Matthew Thurston, Manager, Product & Supply Chain Sustainability, Recreational Equipment, Inc.

Laurie Valeriano, Executive Director, Washington Toxics Coalition

Vesela Veleva, ScD, Associate Director, Center for Sustainable Enterprise & Regional Competitiveness, College of Management, University of Massachusetts Boston

Bill Walsh, JD, Founder & Executive Director, Healthy Building Network

Sarah Westervelt, MA, e-Stewardship Policy Director, Basel Action Network

Margaret Whittaker, PhD, MPH, Managing Director, Chief Toxicologist, ToxServices, LLC

Howard Williams, VP, General Manager, Construction Specialties

Ryan Williams, Director of Sustainability, Method Products, Inc.

Jeff Wilson, MBA, Steering Committee, Chemicals Management Working Group, Outdoor Industry Association

Michael Wilson, PhD, MPH, Director, Labor Occupational Health Program, School of Public Health, University of California Berkeley

Martin Wolf, MA, Director, Product Sustainability & Authenticity, Seventh Generation