



21 Senators Urge EPA to Report on MTBE-Cancer Link July 21, 2005

Washington, DC – U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) and 20 other Senators today requested the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to immediately notify them of the status and expected findings of a study on methyl tertiary butyl ether (MTBE) as a carcinogen. MTBE has contaminated 144 water systems that serve over 32 million Californians.

Senators Feinstein, Olympia Snowe (R-Maine), Evan Bayh (D-Ind.), Barack Obama (D-Ill.), Russ Feingold (D-Wis.), Jim Jeffords (I-Vt.), Joe Lieberman (D-Conn.), Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.), John Kerry (D-Mass.), Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.), Dick Durbin (D-Ill.), Patty Murray (D-Wash.), Chris Dodd (D-Conn.), Hillary Clinton (D-N.Y.), Frank Lautenberg (D-N.J.), Mark Dayton (D-Minn.), Jack Reed (D-R.I.), Paul Sarbanes (D-Md.), Tom Harkin (D-Iowa), Jon Corzine (D-N.J.) and Barbara Mikulski (D-Md.) signed the following letter that was sent to EPA Administrator Stephen Johnson:

“It has recently come to our attention that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is circulating for internal review a draft risk study that may conclude that MTBE (methyl-tertiary-butyl-ether) is a ‘likely’ human carcinogen. This is extremely troubling and certainly warrants further investigation and review. However, equally troubling is that this report appeared as the Congress has begun the formal process of reconciling comprehensive energy legislation (H.R. 6).

As you probably know, one of the major areas of disagreement that the conference committee will face is the issue of granting retroactive liability protection to the manufacturers, producers, and refiners of the fuel additive MTBE. It is well known that MTBE has contaminated groundwater supplies across the country and that hundreds of municipalities, water districts, and some states are currently seeking to recover the costs associated with removing the contaminant from their water supplies. If ingestion of MTBE is determined to cause adverse human health effects, such as cancer, it is imperative that we have that information.

Therefore, we respectfully request that you notify us immediately as to the status of the internal review and what findings EPA is anticipated to make regarding the human health effects of MTBE. Thank you in advance for your compliance with our request.”

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