

## ISSUE 2119 - Monday 19 June 2006

### Deca-BDE use “enormously beneficial”

A cost-benefit analysis model developed by the Swedish national testing and research institute (SP) to investigate the consequences of banning brominated flame retardants has concluded that, in one application at least, the benefits of their use “far outweigh” the costs.

SP's study focuses – for the first time, it claims – on the use of deca-BDE in television sets. It's findings are politically sensitive because the Swedish government wants to ban deca-BDE ([EED 28/02/06](#)) and because the chemical has become a focal point for debate over the EU's Reach chemical policy.

SP says its study balances the costs of flame retarding a product and disposing of it at the end of the product life cycle against lives saved, injuries avoided and capital costs avoided through fires averted. It assigns zero costs for adverse health effects, arguing that available data do not demonstrate such impacts.

The costs of fires – human and economic – on the other hand, are very significant, SP reports. It estimates that deca-BDE used in televisions avoids 11 full house fires per million TV sets, so avoiding 160 deaths and 2,000 injuries per year across Europe. Overall it puts the net benefit of deca-BDE use at US\$0.68-1.38bn (€0.54-1.10bn) per year.

\* Meanwhile, environmental group Greenpeace claimed new support for strengthening the EU's Reach regulation on Monday, from fashion designers. At an event in Madrid, designers unveiled clothes “designed to avoid the use of toxic chemicals”. Greenpeace also announced pledges by two fashion retailers to phase out their use of hazardous chemicals including lead, nickel, chromium IV, phthalates and formaldehyde.

The group described the initiative as “a well-dressed wake-up call to grey-suited types in Brussels” as they prepare to vote on Reach this autumn. Environmental groups are campaigning for stronger encouragement to substitute hazardous chemicals to be written into the regulation.

Follow-up: [SP](#) (<http://www.sp.se/sv/default.asp>), tel: +46 33 16 50 00 and the [report](#) (<http://wpy.observer.se/wpyfs/00/00/00/00/00/07/DA/2B/wkr0010.pdf>) (in English). See also Greenpeace [press release](#) (<http://www.greenpeace.org/international/news/toxicfreefashion190606>).

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