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{ TRACKING THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION'S ENVIRONMENTAL MISDEEDS. }


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Senator Challenges EPA on Military Jet Fuel

Arousing further concern about the influence of the Department of Defense (DOD) over the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Senate Environment and Public Works Committee Chairman James Inhofe (R-OK) has written a letter to the EPA urging the agency to reconsider its classification of the chemical naphthalene as a "likely" carcinogen. Naphthalene constitutes one to three percent of military jet fuel and has contaminated military bases nationwide.

Industry and military sources say that classifying naphthalene as a potential carcinogen would generate costly safety, health and cleanup standards, as well as increasing their liability for contaminated sites.

Inhofe's letter to EPA Administrator Stephen Johnson asserts that EPA's preliminary classification "has the potential for dramatic effects on the thousands of everyday uses of naphthalene, which is a component in most transportation fuels.

Toxics Release

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I am concerned that this rush to judgment will have a severe and significant impact on our communities, industry and military." [1]

Tara Thornton, executive director of the [Military Toxics Project](#), told [BushGreenwatch](#) that, "Inhofe's letter is another DOD-influenced attempt to tie one of EPA's hands behind its back in its risk assessment policies."

Inhofe claims that the scientific data supporting the classification of naphthalene as a probable carcinogen is inadequate. He further claims that important regulatory decisions based on faulty science occur all too often at EPA. Sen. Inhofe says he is "concerned that making decisions before the science is adequately established is becoming the norm for EPA, as evidenced by similar circumstances with both formaldehyde in 2004 and perchlorate in 2002." [2]

Inhofe was a key figure in pushing to exempt the military from cleaning up perchlorate, a chemical found in rocket fuel. In his effort to push exemption, Inhofe cited a National Academy of Sciences (NAS) report which concluded that, "the outcomes selected by EPA should [not] be used as the basis of the perchlorate risk assessment." Environmental experts charged that the DOD heavily influenced the NAS study, and that in fact perchlorate protections established by EPA are not stringent enough. [3]

In 2003 Inhofe wrote a last-minute amendment to the Senate Defense Authorization Bill designed to exempt the military from hazardous waste laws. Critics claim the amendment was written by the DOD. Lenny Siegal of the [Center for Public Environmental Oversight](#) said of the amendment, "it appears, from the actual language that Defense Department attorneys crafted the Inhofe proposal." [4]

Asserting that Inhofe is again trying to protect the DOD rather than acknowledge the science, Military Toxics Project's Tara Thornton told [BushGreenwatch](#), "I don't think there is a problem

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with EPA's science. But Senator Inhofe has fought very hard to protect the Pentagon from environmental regulations. He argues that compliance would interfere with training and readiness, which is not the case at all."

Both the U.S. National Toxicology Program of the National Institutes of Health, and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry have conducted studies that link naphthalene to cancer in mice and other species. [5]

Tim Kropp, senior scientist at the [Environmental Working Group](#), an organization that conducted extensive research on the effects of naphthalene, told [BushGreenwatch](#), "The Inhofe letter, in a strange way, is one of the clearest examples of what some opponents of the EPA want: they want to prevent EPA from making any decisions ever. If you require more evidence than what is already out there, you must want to know everything-- which is just impossible," said Kropp. "The letter is completely unreasonable; there is no way anybody could come up with more certainty."

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SOURCES:

[1] "Inhofe Threatens Confirmation Flap Over Naphthalene Risk Review," Risk Policy Report, Aug. 9, 2005.

[2] Ibid.

[3] "[Dangers of Rocket Fuel Chemical Downplayed](#)," Washington Post, Jan. 11, 2005.

[4] "[The Inhofe Amendment: Still Unacceptable](#)," Center for Public Environmental Oversight, May 21, 2003.

[5] [ToxFAQs](#), Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry; and "[NTP Completes 500TH Two-Year Rodent Study and Report; Series is the Gold Standard of Animal Toxicology](#)," NIEHS, Jan. 25, 2001.

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