



Potomac Agenda: 2009

In the past 30 years, the federal government has taken steps to limit legacy pollutants, such as lead, mercury or PCBs, from damaging the natural environment and human health. Intersex fish in our rivers are a troubling indicator of new pollutants in the water. These emerging contaminants also pose a threat to drinking water because older systems are not designed to filter these compounds, and as a result don't protect us very well.

Congress needs to require 21st century scientific testing for the chemicals compounds that can mimic natural hormones and disrupt the endocrine system. In addition, Congress needs to update the regulatory framework to deal with these new pollutants found in the Potomac River, Shenandoah River and other tributaries.

Our goal should be to keep endocrine disrupting compounds out of the water, rather than trying to remove them once in the water. Specifically we ask the federal government to take steps to:

A) Decrease exposure to endocrine disrupting compounds by:

- 1) Limiting the introduction of new chemical compounds. Given the troubling findings about intersex fish, we urge caution before allowing additional endocrine disruptors to be brought to market. We believe that precautionary measures should be taken even if the cause and effect relationship is not fully established scientifically.
- 2) Providing drug-take back programs so individuals can safely dispose of unneeded or expired medications, rather than flushing them into our waste-water system.

B) Increase funding for:

- 1) Current research to understand better the affects of endocrine disrupters on human health, including children;
- 2) Modifying testing and evaluation protocols to be able to screen more compounds and combinations of compounds on an annual basis under the leadership of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences.
- 3) Developing technology to retrofit our wastewater treatment plants and upgrade our drinking water treatment plants

C) Update the regulatory framework by:

- 1) Enforcing and strengthening clean water regulations, including amending the Safe Drinking Water Act to prevent the chemicals from entering water supplies
- 2) Passing more stringent stormwater regulations at the state and county level to help capture what is coming off of the land before it gets into drinking water supplies.

We call on members of Congress, including Representative Jim Moran, Representative Chris Van Hollen, and Senator Ben Cardin, to be champions on this issue and take a leadership role shepherding these recommendations into law.