



# Statement

For Immediate Release

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## NAFRA RESPONDS TO ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PERSPECTIVES STUDY

WASHINGTON, D.C. (June 1, 2012) – The North American Flame Retardant Alliance (NAFRA) of the American Chemistry Council (ACC) issued the following statement in response to findings from a study that has been published online by the *Environmental Health Perspectives*, which claims that flame retardant chemicals were found in many popular food items.

“Based on these findings, the real story is that HBCD was not detected in the majority of the samples and in those where it was, it was well below levels where one might see adverse health effects,” said Jackson Morrill, director in the Chemical Products & Technology Division of the ACC. “The authors themselves note that human exposure from the foods that were studied is well below critical effect levels identified by the European Union; therefore these results should not pose a concern for human health.”

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- Although the researchers said they used a convenience sample of foods, the foods they chose were based on a previous study. Therefore, the types of foods they picked were informed by where they had quantifiable HBCD in the past (page 9). This approach would potentially bias the results by making them higher than, perhaps, if the researchers had randomly picked foods.
- The researchers actually do note on page 16, "It is noteworthy that calculated HBCD intake previously reported for Dallas, Texas foods of 15.3 ng/day,  $2.1 \times 10^{-7}$  mg/kg-bw/day for a 70 kg individual (Schechter et al. 2009), is below 10 mg/kg-bw/day, which is the no observed adverse effect level (NOAEL) in rats after exposure to the HBCD commercial mixture. This level is used as the critical effect level by the European Union to characterize risk (EU RAR 2008)." Hence, from the animal studies, exposures from food are well below the NOAEL with a very large margin of exposure, thus you would not expect any concern. The levels detected in this study are slightly below what Schechter found in 2009.
- The abstract and conclusions on page 5 as well as part of the takeaway message should have included the relevance of the finding that HBCD is well below the NOAEL so that the study does not unnecessarily raise concerns. But this message is not carried forward.

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- The researchers' conclusion focuses on what was found most frequently, rather than the bigger picture, which is that, in total, even with their biased convenience sampling, these congeners were found < 50% of the time. It is not clear why, based on this, the researchers say food may be a substantial contributor to the elevated levels seen in humans.

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*The American Chemistry Council (ACC) represents the leading companies engaged in the business of chemistry. ACC members apply the science of chemistry to make innovative products and services that make people's lives better, healthier and safer. ACC is committed to improved environmental, health and safety performance through Responsible Care<sup>®</sup>, common sense advocacy designed to address major public policy issues, and health and environmental research and product testing. The business of chemistry is a \$720 billion enterprise and a key element of the nation's economy. It is one of the nation's largest exporters, accounting for ten cents out of every dollar in U.S. exports. Chemistry companies are among the largest investors in research and development. Safety and security have always been primary concerns of ACC members, and they have intensified their efforts, working closely with government agencies to improve security and to defend against any threat to the nation's critical infrastructure.*

