



Statement

For Immediate Release

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NATIONAL TOXICOLOGY PROGRAM REPORT ON STYRENE: NO CHANGE IN SAFETY OF PLASTIC FOODSERVICE PACKAGING

WASHINGTON, D.C. (June 10, 2011) – *Today, The National Toxicology Program released its Report on Carcinogens, which included the substance styrene. The following statement on the safety of foodservice packaging products made from polystyrene can be attributed to Cal Dooley, CEO of the American Chemistry Council:*

“In light of the recent inclusion of the substance styrene in the National Toxicology Program’s (NTP) 12th Report on Carcinogens, some people may wonder whether federal regulators have changed their view on the safety of plastic foodservice packaging made with styrene. The answer is no.

“Polystyrene plastic has been used in foodservice products – foam coffee cups, salad bar takeout containers, cutlery – for more than five decades. Polystyrene has been reviewed by regulatory agencies (including U.S. FDA) that have deemed it safe for use in contact with food.”

About Styrene

In addition to its use in making polystyrene, styrene is naturally present in foods such as strawberries, beef, beer, and cinnamon and is naturally produced in the processing of foods such as wine and cheese.

To put its recent report in perspective, NTP states: “It is important to note that the reports do not present quantitative assessments of carcinogenic risk... Listing in the report does not establish that such substances present a risk to persons in their daily lives. Such formal risk assessments are the purview of the appropriate federal, state, and local health regulatory and research agencies.”¹ So NTP *has not concluded* that styrene or plastic foodservice packaging made with styrene present any risk to human health.

For more information about the listing of styrene in the NTP Report:

<http://www.styrene.org/news/releases.html>

For more information about the RoC:

<http://ntp.niehs.nih.gov/index.cfm?objectid=03CA6383-9766-1F64-6637241FE0114FE9>

¹ National Toxicology Program, Questions and Answers about the RoC, “What does a listing in the RoC mean?,” <http://ntp.niehs.nih.gov/index.cfm?objectid=03CA6383-9766-1F64-6637241FE0114FE9>.



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Safety Regulations – Based on scientific tests over five decades, government safety agencies have determined that polystyrene is safe for use in foodservice products. For example, polystyrene meets the stringent standards of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the [European Commission/European Food Safety Authority](#) for use in packaging to store and serve food. The [Hong Kong Food and Environmental Hygiene Department](#) recently reviewed the safety of serving various foods in polystyrene foodservice products and reached the same conclusion as the U.S. FDA.

Harvard Center for Risk Assessment – A twelve-member panel of international experts selected by the Harvard Center for Risk Analysis reported in 2002 that the very low levels of styrene present in foods – whether naturally occurring or from polystyrene foodservice products – does not represent a concern to human health.

For more information on the safety of polystyrene foodservice products:

<http://www.plasticfoodservicefacts.com/main/Safety/default.aspx>

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<http://www.americanchemistry.com>

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