

Overview of Voluntary Industry Commitments by OECD Manufacturers of Brominated Flame Retardants to Take Risk Management Action

In 1991, OECD's Risk Reduction Programme began an investigation of brominated flame retardants to explore the possibility of taking further action to reduce risk. In 1994, an OECD monograph was published [OCDE/GD(94)96] which discussed the commercial and environmental life cycle of these substances as well as risk reduction measures implemented in Member countries and these countries' positions on the perceived risk from these substances.

Discussions were held in 1995 between Member countries and industry on possible activities that could be taken to further reduce risk. The result of these discussions was a proposed commitment, made by the major global producers of brominated flame retardants, to take certain risk management actions on tetrabromobisphenol A, polybrominated biphenyls (PBBs), and polybrominated diphenyl oxides (PBDPOs). This commitment was formally presented to OECD's 23rd Joint Meeting of the Chemicals Group and Management Committee in June, 1995. The Joint Meeting agreed to oversee such actions and industry agreed to report to OECD every two years regarding their implementation of this initiative. (A copy of industry's commitment is attached.)

At the 24th Joint Meeting in February 1996, a similar voluntary industry commitment, proposed by the Japanese manufacturers of these brominated flame retardants, was presented. The Joint Meeting agreed to incorporate this commitment with the one developed by the U.S. and European brominated flame retardant manufacturers. A copy of the Japanese manufacturers' commitment is also attached.

If you have any questions regarding these commitments, or the risk reduction programme, please contact Richard Sigman (tel: 33 1 4524 1680; fax: 33 1 4524 1675; e-mail: Richard.Sigman@oecd.org).