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STATEMENT

The following statement is in response to recent news reports about a literature review conducted and funded by the environmental group, Green Policy Institute, and a subsequent statement that was signed by a group of stakeholders at the International Symposium on Halogenated Persistent Organic Pollutants and published on the website of Environmental Health Perspectives. Dr. Ray Dawson, Chairman of the global industry group Bromine Science and Environmental Forum (www.bsef.com) made the following comments:

The development of chemicals regulation is not helped by well-meaning but misguided statements of this kind. Many of the concerns raised (e.g. the finding of one part per million of a substance in the environment) have been shown by independent regulatory assessments not to represent a risk to human health or the environment. Others (e.g. the presence of substances in waste exported to countries with lower standards of waste management) are not specific to brominated or chlorinated flame retardants.

We are not aware of any of the signatories of the statement at the International Symposium on Halogenated Persistent Organic Pollutants as having expertise in the area of fire prevention and safety. To state that the "benefit (of brominated and chlorinated flame retardants) in improving fire safety has not been proven" is literally playing with fire. Material flammability and flame retardancy (which has been shown to increase "escape time" from a fire by up to fifteen times) have been extensively studied. Given the flammability of modern materials, the life-saving role of flame retardant chemicals has never been more important for the fire safety of private citizens and the public at large.

The regulation of chemicals is approaching a watershed with the implementation in the EU of REACH and moves in the U.S. to reform the TSCA. BSEF is fully engaged in these initiatives as they are founded on scientific knowledge and an assessment of risk. Furthermore, BSEF supports the correct application and enforcement of existing rules on waste such as the EU's Directive on WEEE.

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