

**RESOLUTION NO. 004-01-COE**

**May 21, 2001**

[Wood Preservatives]

URGING THE CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO TO URGE PG&E, PACIFIC BELL, AND MANUFACTURERS OF NON-WOOD UTILITY POLES TO CONDUCT A FEASIBILITY STUDY OF ALTERNATIVES TO CHEMICALLY TREATED WOOD UTILITY POLES AND TO URGE ALL UTILITY POLE OWNERS TO TAKE STEPS TO PROTECT PUBLIC HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT FROM WOOD PRESERVATIVES IN UTILITY POLES.

WHEREAS, In 1999, the City and County of San Francisco adopted an Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Ordinance stating that it shall be the policy of the City to aggressively pursue the goal of reducing the health and environmental impact of products used in its operations<sup>1</sup>; and,

WHEREAS, in 1996, the City and County of San Francisco adopted an Integrated Pest Management Ordinance mandating that San Francisco minimize its pesticide use and reduce the negative impact of pesticides on people and the environment<sup>2</sup>; and,

WHEREAS, the Integrated Pest Management Ordinance does not currently include any wood preservatives on the “Approved List of Reduced Risk Pesticides” for San Francisco; and,

WHEREAS, the U.S. EPA estimates that nearly 700 million pounds of wood preservatives are used annually in the United States<sup>3</sup>; and,

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<sup>1</sup> San Francisco Administrative Code, Chapter 21F Environmentally Preferable Purchasing

<sup>2</sup> San Francisco Administrative Code, Chapter 39 San Francisco Integrated Pest Management Program

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Pesticides, November 1999. Pesticides Industry Sales and Usage: 1996 and 1997 Market Estimates, US EPA. U.S. Usage of

WHEREAS, an analysis of EPA's Inventory of Sources of Dioxin in the United States notes that treated wood is a large potential source of dioxin in the environment<sup>4</sup>; and,

WHEREAS, the Commission on the Environment and the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco have adopted resolutions urging the elimination of dioxin pollution<sup>5</sup>; and,

WHEREAS, the City and County of San Francisco prohibits the use, requisition or purchase, directly or indirectly, by any City or County department or agency, of any tropical hardwoods or tropical hardwood wood products as well as virgin redwood or virgin redwood wood products; and,

WHEREAS, the US EPA has classified Pentachlorophenol (Penta), the most commonly used wood preservative, as a Group B2, probable human carcinogen<sup>6</sup>; and,

WHEREAS, the contaminants of Penta, namely dioxins, furans, and hexachlorobenzene (HCB) are all recognized as carcinogens, mutagens, teratogens, and endocrine disruptors<sup>7</sup>; and,

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Conventional and Other Types of Pesticides 1996 / 1997 Estimates.

[http://www.epa.gov/oppbead1/pestsales/97pestsales/table4\\_5.htm](http://www.epa.gov/oppbead1/pestsales/97pestsales/table4_5.htm). EPA Contract No. 733-R-99-001

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, National Center for Environmental Assessment, Office of Research and Development, 1998. Report on the Meeting to Peer Review "The Inventory of Sources of Dioxin in the United States" Final Report. EPA Contract No. 68-D5-0028. <http://www.epa.gov/nceawww1/pdfs/dioxin/dioxinpr.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Commission on the Environment, Resolution No. 021-98-COE. Dioxin, Public Health, and the Environment. Board of Supervisors, Resolution No. 246-99. Dioxin.

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS) on Pentachlorophenol. Environmental Criteria and Assessment Office, Office of Health and Environmental Assessment, Office of Research and Development, Cincinnati, OH. 1993. <http://www.epa.gov/ngispgm3/iris/subst/0086.htm#I1>.

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, National Center for Environmental Assessment website, URL: <http://www.epa.gov/ncea/dioxin.htm>; Mukerjee, D, Health Impact of Polychlorinated Dibenzo-p-dioxins: A Critical Review, J. Air & Waste Manage. Assoc. 48: 157-165, (1998); Etoxnet PIP Hexachlorobenzene, URL: <http://ace.orst.edu/cgi->

WHEREAS, Penta is banned in several countries outside of the United States due to health or environmental risks<sup>8</sup>; and,

WHEREAS, the US EPA has classified Creosote, another common wood preservative, as a Group B1, probable human carcinogen<sup>9</sup>; and,

WHEREAS, Creosote contains polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, which are classified as Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)<sup>10</sup> and are listed on the US EPA's Priority list of hazardous substances<sup>11</sup>; and,

WHEREAS, at least 314 Superfund or chemical waste sites in the United States have been contaminated with Penta and 31 Superfund sites have been contaminated with Creosote<sup>12</sup>; and,

WHEREAS, another common wood preservative, Copper Chromium Arsenic (CCA), contains inorganic arsenic which has been classified by the US EPA as a Group A, known human carcinogen<sup>13</sup>; and,

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[bin/mfs/01/pips/hexachlo.htm](http://www.mfs/01/pips/hexachlo.htm); World Wildlife Fund, 1996. Known and Suspected Hormone Disruptors List, URL: <http://www.wwfcanada.org/hormone-disruptors/science/edclist.html>.

<sup>8</sup> United Nations, "Consolidated List of Products Whose Consumption and/or Sale Have Been Banned, Withdrawn, Severely Restricted or Not Approved by Governments," Fifth Issue, 1994.

<sup>9</sup> U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS) on Creosote. Environmental Criteria and Assessment Office, Office of Health and Environmental Assessment, Office of Research and Development, Cincinnati, OH. 1993.

<http://www.epa.gov/ngispgm3/iris/subst/0360.htm#II>.

<sup>10</sup> United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution website, URL: [http://www.unece.org/env/lrtap/pops\\_h1.htm](http://www.unece.org/env/lrtap/pops_h1.htm)

<sup>11</sup> Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, 1999, URL:

<http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/cxcx3.gymI>

<sup>12</sup> Agency for Toxic Substance and Disease Registry, 1999. Site Containment Query, URL: [http://atsdr1.atsdr.cdc.gov:8080/gsql/sitecontam.script?in\\_cas=pentachlorophenol&in\\_cas3=](http://atsdr1.atsdr.cdc.gov:8080/gsql/sitecontam.script?in_cas=pentachlorophenol&in_cas3=)

<sup>13</sup> U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS) on Arsenic, inorganic, URL: <http://www.epa.gov/ngispgm3/iris/subst/0278.htm#II>

WHEREAS, CCA also contains chromium VI, which is listed as a chemical known to cause cancer under California's Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act<sup>14</sup> and has been classified by the US EPA as a Group A, known human carcinogen of high carcinogenic hazard<sup>15</sup>; and,

WHEREAS, other chemicals used to preserve wood utility poles may have adverse impacts on human health and the environment; and,

WHEREAS, the handling of chemically treated wood utility poles and the retreatment of existing chemically treated wood utility poles could expose the public to serious health hazards; and,

WHEREAS, PG&E and Pacific Bell own the majority of the chemically treated wood utility poles in San Francisco; and,

WHEREAS, PG&E and Pacific Bell have agreed to work with the Department of the Environment to identify alternatives to chemically treated wood utility poles in a timely manner; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Commission on the Environment urges the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco to urge PG&E, Pacific Bell, and manufacturers of non-wood utility poles, including steel, fiberglass, and concrete utility pole manufacturers, to conduct a feasibility study, within six months of the passage of this resolution, of alternatives to chemically treated wood utility poles, including an analysis of the effectiveness of wrapping chemically treated wood poles to prevent leaching of chemicals into the

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<sup>14</sup> California's Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act, 1986. URL: [http://www.oehha.ca.gov/prop65/out\\_of\\_date/pdf\\_zip/22301LSTA.pdf](http://www.oehha.ca.gov/prop65/out_of_date/pdf_zip/22301LSTA.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> U.S. Environmental Protection Agency web site, URL: <http://www.epa.gov/ttn/uatw/hlthef/chromium.html>

environment, a plan for the safe disposal of chemically treated wood poles, and an explanation as to why alternatives to chemically treated wood poles cannot be used in particular situations; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Commission on the Environment urges the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco to urge that utility pole owners, as a precautionary measure, cover, within twelve months of the passage of this resolution, the first five feet above ground level of all existing chemically treated wood poles owned by them that are located within 100 feet of any elementary school or park and of all existing chemically treated wood poles owned by them that are located within 100 feet of any licensed day care center, upon request of the day care center; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Commission on the Environment urges the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco to urge that utility pole owners present an annual report to the Commission on the Environment on the number and location of poles that were replaced, including the types of replacement poles that were installed; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Commission on the Environment urges the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco to urge utility pole owners to not purchase utility poles made from old growth wood such as tropical hardwood or virgin redwood; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Commission on the Environment urges the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco to urge that all storage sites within San Francisco of treated poles must be covered from the elements of weather; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Commission on the Environment urges the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco to urge the State of California to conduct a feasibility study for wrapping chemically treated wood utility poles and to identify and promote alternatives to chemically treated wood utility poles.

*I hereby certify that this resolution was adopted by the Commission on the Environment at its regular meeting on May 21, 2001.*

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*Sraddha Mehta*  
*Commission Secretary*

**VOTE:**

**Ayes:** *Commissioners Hayes, Bingham, Shah, Werbe, Rodriguez, and Bradford-Bell.*

**Noes:** *None.*

**Absent:** *Commissioner Evans.*