

DID YOU KNOW?

Nanotechnology is a hot topic this summer. Nanoparticles can demonstrate chemical and physical properties that are different from the properties of these same materials in larger quantities. For example, nanosilver is antimicrobial, but regular ('bulk') silver is not.

Although nanomaterials are ingredients of many products on the Canadian market, including cosmetics and foods, only the disclosure of the bulk substance is required in Canada. Nanoingredients are not often reported even though little is known about the risks they may pose to human health and the environment. Few government regulations are in place to control nanotechnology.

Selected Research and Publications

Submission to the Annual Ministerial meeting of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) – June 27, 2007. Executive Director Anne Mitchell submitted an oral statement on nanotechnology as an issue of continental concern at the CEC's Annual Ministerial meeting. She called the Ministers' attention to CIELAP's *Discussion Paper on a Policy Framework for Nanotechnology*. Part of NAFTA's administrative framework, the CEC deals with interjurisdictional environmental problems affecting Canada, the United States, and Mexico. Download Anne's submission from CIELAP's website.

Two CIELAP publications in peer reviewed journals. In the Winter and Spring of 2006/07 two CIELAP research articles were published in peer reviewed journals: "Managing mercury in the Great Lakes: an analytical review of abatement policies," – in the *Journal of Environmental Management* (authored by CIELAP researchers Satya P. Mohapatra, Iana Nikolova, and Executive Director Anne Mitchell); and "Sustainable Groundwater Allocation in the Great Lakes Basin" – in the *International Journal of Water Resources Development* (authored by Satya P. Mohapatra, Timothy L. Morris, and Anne Mitchell).

Nanotechnology Knowledge Cluster Meeting. At CIELAP's May 31st Nanotechnology Knowledge Cluster meeting representatives of various NGOs and other interested individuals gathered at the CIELAP office to share information about nanotechnology policy and regulation. The group used the *Discussion Paper* from CIELAP's March 2007 Nanotechnology Workshop as a discussion piece. Download the summary notes from this meeting from CIELAP's website.

CIELAP Publications on Hazardous Waste, Greenbelt policies, and Waste Electronics – coming soon!

CIELAP's report on Hazardous Waste in Ontario will update some of the data from CIELAP's previous *Open for Toxics* reports, highlight progress made by the provincial government in recent years in managing hazardous waste, and make recommendations on gaps that remain and work that needs to be done.

CIELAP's "Study of Greenbelts in Europe and North America: Lessons to be Learned", completed with support from the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation, will look at jurisdictions in Europe and North America that have established greenbelts near rapidly growing urban areas. It will then explore the lessons learned in greenbelts in other jurisdictions and identify policies and activities that have resulted in success or failure.

CIELAP's paper on Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) will analyze and articulate this rapidly emerging issue in order to help the government of Ontario and municipalities take proactive steps to minimize the human and environmental health risks of dealing with rapidly increasing levels of WEEE.

Watch for their releases in the coming months!

Government News

The Canadian Government's 2007 Science and Technology Strategy – *Mobilizing Science and Technology to Canada's Advantage* – released. Among other changes, the Government's new Strategy eliminated the Canadian Biotechnology Advisory Committee (CBAC), along with other advisory groups, and is replacing it with an advisory council made up of university and industry appointees, with no representation from NGOs and other important voices. CIELAP is concerned that the ethical, social and environmental aspects of biotechnology, including considerations for environmental regulation and a precautionary approach, will be underrepresented on this new council. CIELAP has voiced its opinion to the Minister of Industry in writing. The strategy also does little to advance an appropriate policy framework for nanotechnology.

Another concern is that it proposes transferring non-regulatory government laboratories to universities or the private sector. This may have negative implications for existing research priorities including emerging contaminants and other water quality issues.

Program for Electronic and Electrical Equipment Waste to be developed in Ontario. The Ontario Ministry of Environment has announced that an industry-funded waste diversion program will be developed to prevent electronic waste from going to landfills. A program proposal for the first phase of the program is expected by February 1, 2008. Visit the Ministry's website to view the Program Letter to Waste Diversion Ontario requesting the development of this program.

Pharmaceuticals and Personal Care Products highlighted in the Minister of the Environment's 1st Annual Report on Drinking Water. CIELAP applauds the Ontario Ministry of the Environment for highlighting the hazards of Pharmaceuticals and Personal Care Products (PPCPs) in its First Annual Report on Drinking Water, released in July, and for the actions it has proposed to address the issue – performing further research on PPCPs and working with the Ontario College of Pharmacists to initiate a province-wide “take-back” program for the safe disposal of pharmaceuticals. These actions follow the recommendations CIELAP made in its 2006 Report “*There is No AWAY*” on the topic. We look forward to further Ministry actions on this emerging concern.

Program plan received for the first phase of the Municipal Hazardous or Special Waste (MHSW) program. On May 25, the Minister of the Environment received the first phase of the MHSW program plan from Waste Diversion Ontario (WDO). In general CIELAP supports the components of the plan. However, we do encourage the Ministry and WDO to move quickly in implementing the first phase of the plan and turning their attention to the wastes left to the second phase of the plan. In particular, a plan and facilities for the safe disposal of compact fluorescent light bulbs are urgently needed in Ontario given the provincial government's recent announcement that it will ban the sale of incandescent light bulbs in Ontario by 2012 and promote the sale of more efficient lighting, such as CFLs. View CIELAP's detailed comments on the CIELAP website.

Proposals on the Ontario registry:

Phase-out date for Coal-fired electricity generating facilities. Deadline for Comment: August 11, 2007

Events Calendar

Green Screens Movie Showing: The Falls (1991). On September 24th CIELAP and the NFB will be screening *The Falls*, a documentary on the ecosystem(s) of the Great Lakes by Canadian filmmaker and activist Kevin McMahon. Following the presentation, a panel discussion will examine Great Lakes concerns over the years. CIELAP has invited the director to discuss his work on the film and another upcoming feature also focusing on the Great Lakes. Visit CIELAP's website later in the summer for more details.

Other CIELAP News

As announced this month in *The Lawyers Weekly*, Research Director Maureen Carter-Whitney has become the updating author of LexisNexis' loose-leaf publication *Environmental Approvals in Canada*.

Get Involved

Student outreach: CIELAP would like to broaden its student audience. Please contact us if you would like to help us do so.

Donate: CIELAP relies on individual donations to help us advance our work. Please consider making a donation online

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