



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **PUBLIC HEALTH VICTORY CELEBRATED AS BOSTON CITY COUNCIL PASSES DIOXIN RESOLUTION**

***First of its kind measure in New England will use city's purchasing power to  
reduce world's worst toxin***

Today residents of Boston praised the Boston City Council for passing the Dioxin Resolution, which will reduce people's exposure to a known human carcinogen by establishing city purchasing guidelines that favor materials that do not produce dioxin. The resolution, the first of its kind on the East Coast, passed today by unanimous vote.

"The Boston City Council deserves great praise for choosing to use the city's purchasing power to protect the health of women and children. This is a huge public victory," said Tiffany Skogstrom of Health Care without Harm Boston. "City Councilors were under tremendous pressure from some lobbyists to kill this public health initiative, but true leaders such as Councilors Felix Arroyo and John Tobin listened to the voices of their constituents and put our children's health ahead of outside corporate pressure."

"Because of Councilors Arroyo and Tobin, the breast milk of mothers in Boston will be cleaner and our babies will be safer and healthier," said Jenny Dahlstein a resident of the Jamaica Plain section of Boston.

Dioxin is a family of toxic and persistent chemicals known to cause cancer at extremely small doses. Dioxin is also linked to other health problems, including diabetes, infertility and immune system suppression. One of the culprits in creating dioxin is polyvinyl chloride (PVC) plastic, which releases dioxin when it is incinerated as part of the waste stream or in a house fire. The dioxin resolution will establish a plan for the city to choose affordable alternatives to vinyl plastic and other dioxin creating products.

The resolution -- proposed by Health Care Without Harm, the Alliance for a Healthy Tomorrow, the Healthy Building Network and other local groups -- was originally brought to the City Council for a vote Aug. 27 but was sent back to committee for a second hearing. At that hearing last Thursday, local residents came head to head with industry representatives who were flown in from across the country and Canada to testify. Two memos circulated by the Vinyl Institute, a trade association representing the leading

manufacturers of vinyl materials, reveal a full-scale campaign to attack the dioxin resolution.

Boston residents testifying in favor of the resolution included Nick DeMarino, President of the International Association of Fire Fighters Local 718; Roger Swartz from the Boston Public Health Commission; Louise Forrest Bowes from Dana Farber Cancer Institute; and Vietnam veteran advocate Dr. Paul Atwood from the William

Joiner Center for the Study of War and Social Consequences from University of Massachusetts - Boston, who gave a chilling account of dioxin exposure from the spraying of Agent Orange. Dr. Linda Birnbaum, US EPA expert on dioxin, testified about the human health impacts of dioxin exposure.

Dr. Richard Clapp from Boston University School of Public Health, one of a team of scientists who reviewed the EPA's draft dioxin reassessment, praised today's vote. "We applaud the Boston City Councilors for listening to constituents' concerns and passing this resolution today. Councilor Arroyo's courage and commitment to public health truly represents the best interest of the citizens who elected him."

"I'm proud to be the lead sponsor of this important City Council Resolution to reduce dioxin pollution in Boston," stated Councilor Arroyo. "Our Council recognized the opportunity to act on this important public health issue and we can only move forward from here."

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**ATTENTION TV CONSUMER REPORTERS: The city of Boston has agreed to stop buying products that contribute to the dioxin load, when cost effective substitutes are available. Consumers can do the same by choosing safer alternatives for many common household purchases, including paper whitened without chlorine, food containers made of non-vinyl plastic or glass, canvas or nylon shower curtains, cloth car seats, and toys made from non-vinyl plastic or wood.**