



To: Alex Cavadias
Chemical Sectors Division
Environmental Stewardship Branch
Environment Canada
351 St. Joseph Blvd.
Gatineau, QC
K1A 0H3

Re: Proposed Elements for Regulations to Limit VOC's in Consumer Products

From: Pollution Probe

Date: October 31st, 2006

Please accept this submission as Pollution Probe's formal comments on the proposed notice cited above. Pollution Probe supports the Federal Government's efforts to limit Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) in Consumer Products (Personal Care, Household, Automotive Aftermarket, and Adhesive Products). Pollution Probe has done considerable research in the area of VOCs and smog, including the Primer on Volatile Organic Compounds (available at: <http://www.pollutionprobe.org/Reports/vocprimer.pdf>).

Pollution Probe is particularly concerned that air quality continues to be a serious health problem in many parts of Canada, especially the Windsor-Quebec corridor, the lower mainland of British Columbia and the Atlantic Provinces. Elevated levels of ground-level ozone are due in part to national VOC emissions levels whose trends have remained relatively flat for the past decade. Consequently, there are many regions across Canada that continue to exceed Canada Wide Standards for ground-level ozone (O₃), as well as fine Particulate Matter (PM_{2.5}). The proposed initiative to regulate VOCs in consumer products is an important step forward in reducing a significant precursor of ground-level ozone, and in achieving Canada Wide Standards.

In general, Pollution Probe supports the following elements of the proposed regulations:

- The alignment of Canadian regulations with those in the United States;
- The adoption of categories based on the current California Air Resources Board (CARB);
- Products that can be categorized into different categories must meet the most restrictive VOC content limit;

- A national approach to the implementation and enforcement of product content regulations; and
- The provision of regulatory certainty and a “level playing field” for manufacturers and importers of consumer products.

More specifically, Pollution Probe supports the proposed limits outlined in Annex 2 of the Discussion Paper, which tend to meet the most restrictive VOC limit that complies with the Ozone Transport Commission (OTC) Model Rule or the CARB 2006 limits. Although these limits are considerably higher than those established by the US EPA, the significance of transboundary pollution and the importance of the harmonization of limits within air sheds justifies the need for Canada to reach the lower limits by January 1st, 2009. Furthermore, since climate change is projected to increase the frequency and severity of smog episodes in the Windsor – Quebec corridor (due to hotter temperatures, and changes in the movement of oppressive air masses from the Ohio Valley), in the future the Federal Government should give serious consideration to moving towards the lower limits proposed by CARB 2008.

To facilitate the implementation and regulation of new limits on VOCs in consumer products, Pollution Probe would be pleased to assist the Federal Government in the following ways:

- Explore the development and adoption of a risk assessment framework for firms unable to meet the proposed limits;
- Facilitate emission reductions and compliance with the new VOC limits by promoting a voluntary challenge with small to medium enterprises;
- Distribute the Primer on VOCs to manufacturers and importers of consumer goods, and A Guide to Climate Change for Small- to Medium-sized Enterprises (<http://www.pollutionprobe.org/Reports/Guide%20to%20CC%20for%20SMEs.pdf>); and
- Post best practices of firms exceeding the proposed VOC limits (e.g. meeting the CARB 2008 limits) on Pollution Probe’s Voluntary Initiatives Resource Centre website (<http://www.crossdraw.com/pprobe>).

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments.

Sincerely,



Ken Ogilvie
Executive Director
Pollution Probe