

STOCKHOLM CONVENTION DECISION ON PENTACHLOROPHENOL

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Summary

Recently, the Conference of Parties (COP) meeting for the Stockholm, Basel and Rotterdam Conventions was held in Geneva, Switzerland on May 4 -15, 2015. Over 1,000 participants from more than 100 countries participated in the negotiations in Geneva which focused on convention-specific issues such as the listing of new chemicals under the Stockholm and Rotterdam Conventions and adoption of technical guidelines on e-waste and POPs wastes under the Basel Convention.

Of interest to the wood preservation industry, the COP was required to review the recommendation by the POPRC (Persistent Organic Pollutant Review Committee) at their October 2014 meeting to list “Pentachlorophenol and its salts and esters in Annex A of the Convention with specific exemptions for the production and use of PCP for utility poles and crossarms”. After committee debate the final COP decision was to “List PCP and its salts and esters in Annex A with specific exemptions for the production and use of PCP for utility poles and crossarms”.

There are several important details that should be understood about the Convention as well as the listing and exemption process:

- Chemicals may be nominated for examination by a scientific review board and considered for listing in Annex A of the Convention, which leads to the elimination of its use.
- Items that are listed as exemptions in Annex A can continue to be used, but will have a 5 year phase-out period or maybe be granted an additional 5 year exemption.
- The United States is not and has not been a signatory to the Stockholm Convention and therefore is not bound by any decision of the Convention
- Canada is categorized as an Opt-In member, which means the country must actively affirm whether they wish to Opt-In and adopt the specific Annex A listing or not
- Mexico is categorized as an Opt-Out member, which means that in order to avoid adoption of the Annex A listing, they must actively Opt-out.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: In preparation for the recent Conference of Parties, industry worked very closely with the Canadian Government agencies and received support for the ongoing use of Penta. During the review and analysis it was pointed out that the POPRC was not differentiating between sodium-pentachlorophenol and pentachlorophenol. There are significant differences between the two chemicals, but the primary difference is that sodium pentachlorophenol is water soluble and pentachlorophenol is not. Because of its water solubility and therefore its ability to

migrate from its original application/location to other areas, including bodies of water, sodium pentachlorophenol use was discontinued in North America in the early 1980's.

Canada and the United States have concluded comprehensive assessments of penta as an industrial wood preservative, and each country has independently authorized penta for that use. Both Canada and the United States recognized that penta has a long-established use in pressure treating utility poles and cross-arms, and serves a critical role in preserving the uninterrupted delivery of power through the electric grid. Both the U.S.E.P.A. and Canadian PMRA have re-registered penta for use as a wood pole and crossarm preservative in 2012 after a multi-year data collection and analysis.

It was also pointed out that none of the other member countries at the COP are or have used pentachlorophenol and as such listing it in Annex A has no impact on any of their respective country's economies. In essence you have a large group of countries with no stake in the decision voting to eliminate a product that has never been used in their country but whose use has been rigorously studied and regulated for decades within the countries that have used it.

In June 2015 the Canadian government indicated to Wood Preservation Canada that they will support the association position that Canada not opt-in on the Stockholm Convention decision to list Pentachlorophenol with exemptions under Annex A.