

**ALAMEDA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

**\*\* MINUTE ORDER \*\***

*The following is action taken by the Board of Supervisors on January 29, 2002*

Approved as Recommended  Other

Unanimous  Carson  Lai-Bitker  Miley  Steele  Haggerty  - 5

Vote Key: A=Yes; N=No; AB=Abstain; X=Excused

**Documents accompanying this matter:**

- Resolution(s) R-2002-377
- Ordinance(s) \_\_\_\_\_
- Contract(s) \_\_\_\_\_

File No. 16411  
Item No. 7

**Copies sent to:**

**Cheryl Pascual**



**Special Notes:**

I certify that the foregoing is a correct copy of a Minute Order adopted by the Board of Supervisors, Alameda County, State of California.

ATTEST:  
Crystal Hishida, Clerk of the Board  
Board of Supervisors

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy



# BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

AGENDA 7 January 29, 2002

**ALICE LAI-BITKER**

SUPERVISOR THIRD DISTRICT

January 15, 2002

Honorable Board of Supervisors  
1221 Oak Street, Room 536  
Oakland, CA 94612

Dear Board Members:

**SUBJECT: RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING A POLICY ON PERSISTENT,  
BIOACCUMULATIVE TOXINS (PBTs) AND THEIR EFFECTS ON PUBLIC  
HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**Approve the Resolution Establishing an Alameda County Policy on Resolution  
Establishing a Policy on Persistent, Bioaccumulative Toxins (PBTs) and their Effects on  
Public Health and the Environment**

**SUMMARY:**

At the July 10, 2000 Health Committee meeting, members of the Alameda County Board of Supervisors instructed staff to prepare a draft resolution to reduce persistent, bioaccumulative and toxic pollutants (PBTs) to present to the Board of Supervisors.

Over the next months, staff formed working groups among County agencies and departments that purchase, use and dispose of materials that contain or cause PBTs to be generated. The working groups prepared a draft resolution focused upon preventing PBT pollution through source reduction and upon actions that the County itself can take to reduce PBTs in the environment. The resolution does not specify particular actions to be taken, but that working groups evaluate and various PBT reduction and elimination options and that the agencies and departments implement those options that are most feasible.

At the August 6, 2001 Health Committee meeting, Environmental Health presented the draft resolution. The Health Committee recommended that the resolution be agendaized for an upcoming Board of Supervisors' Meeting.

Since September 2001, revisions to the PBT resolution have been made to incorporate suggestions of industry agencies and additional comments from environmental experts and a mission statement for the PBT committee to be formed when approved.

## **DISCUSSION/FINDINGS:**

Because of their inherent properties, environmental pollutants identified as persistent, bioaccumulative and toxic (PBT) chemicals present significant environmental and human health problems. The persistence is a chemical's resistance to breaking down in the environment or in living systems. Bioaccumulative is the tendency for a chemical to continuously increase in concentration in living organisms, and to accumulate at higher levels up the food chain. Toxic refers to the ability of a chemical to cause birth defects, cancers, and other health effects. The traditional management strategies of defining acceptable levels of discharge for pollutants are thus not as effective for PBT pollutants. Strategies targeted towards source elimination and/or maximum reduction PBT discharges must be developed in order to meet these challenges.

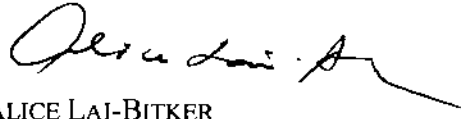
The recommended PBT reduction policy will provide the County with the necessary statement of intent to implement programs to reduce discharges of mercury and dioxin as well as other PBT chemicals of local concern. A PBT reduction policy will provide the necessary direction to the appropriate agencies and departments. Separate policy adoptions for specific PBT chemicals such as mercury and dioxins would be unnecessary under a policy focused on reductions of PBT chemicals. Actions to reduce the discharge of other PBT pollutants could be implemented as soon as they are identified as a concern. Resources could be more effectively allocated and applied under a PBT oriented policy as compared to separate policy actions for each individual pollutant.

Several cities in the Bay Area have adopted PBT reduction or elimination resolutions. In addition, the states of Oregon and Washington have adopted statewide programs to reduce the impact of PBT pollutants, as have states around the Great Lakes and the east coast. Adoption of policies and programs to reduce the discharges of PBT chemicals will provide Alameda County with policy mechanisms similar to those adopted by other Bay Area jurisdictions and other states.

## **FINANCING:**

No County costs are specifically associated with adoption of the resolution. However, depending upon the PBT reduction or elimination steps chosen among the many possible measures, the County could incur additional costs. The County could pay more for some environmentally preferable alternative products. Should the County implement a public relations campaign to raise public awareness of any particular option, such as better fireplace burning practices or a mercury thermometer exchange program, the County could spend between \$25,000 and \$100,000. It is possible that implementing PBT elimination measures will reduce County costs from responding to mercury spills and from hazardous waste disposal fees associated with common building components such as switches and lighting.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alice Lai-Bitker". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

ALICE LAI-BITKER  
Chair, Health Committee

cc: County Counsel  
Auditor-Controller  
Purchasing Agent

**RESOLUTION FOR THE COUNTY OF ALAMEDA  
ESTABLISHING A POLICY ON PERSISTENT, BIOACCUMULATIVE TOXINS  
AND THEIR EFFECTS ON PUBLIC HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

R-2002-377

**Whereas**, a group of pollutants known as Persistent, Bioaccumulative Toxins (PBTs) are toxic, persistent in the environment and accumulate in the food chain, and these characteristics, along with the ubiquity of PBTs in the worldwide environment, pose public and environmental health risks;

**Whereas**, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) has established a list of 12 priority PBTs, including dioxins, PCBs, mercury and its compounds, lead and others, some of which have been linked to increased cancer risk, harm to children, infants and the unborn, disorders of the immune, developmental, endocrine, hormonal, and reproductive systems, as well as other human health problems;

**Whereas**, US EPA's June 2000 reassessment of dioxins health effects estimates that the general public's exposures are near levels that may cause adverse health effects;

**Whereas**, County residents who consume fish from the Bay are at additional risk, as PBT contamination in fish reaches health advisory levels throughout the San Francisco Bay, and San Francisco Bay fish consumers are predominantly low income and people of color;

**Whereas**, low income people and people of color are more likely to live near a source of PBT pollution;

**Whereas**, workers often face disproportionately high exposures to toxic substances found in their work places;

**Whereas**, PBTs have been linked to adverse effects on water quality and aquatic ecosystems, and the San Francisco Bay is listed by the US EPA as impaired by PBTs;

**Whereas**, PBTs have been detected in measurements of treated waste water discharged from pollution sources in the Bay Area and state and local water quality agencies may, as a result, come under a federal mandate to implement new local controls of these pollution sources;

**Whereas**, sources of new PBT pollution are varied and include industrial and commercial processes and products as well as residential activities and certain facilities that are PBT sources are of special concern for neighboring communities;

**Whereas**, other PBTs exist whose chemistry, sources, concentrations and health effects are as yet poorly understood or unknown, which may add to the toxic health effects of US EPA's priority PBTs, and for which no regulatory standards exist;

**Whereas**, respected expert associations and agencies including the California Medical Association, the American Public Health Association, the United Nations Environment Program, the International Joint Commission of the U.S. and Canadian governments, and The California Water Resources Control Board have agreed upon the need to reduce or eliminate PBTs in the environment;

**Whereas**, pollution prevention is recognized as the strategy most highly protective of public and environmental health and most effective in reducing and eliminating releases of PBTs, and cost-effective pollution prevention options as well as environmentally preferable treatment practices and technologies exist for many PBT sources;

**Whereas**, in 1991, the County of Alameda has expressed its support for such pollution prevention activities through the establishment of a County Service Area to address lead in the form of lead-based paint hazards;

**Whereas**, PBT exposures can be reduced through procurement, design, operation, work practice and disposal decisions that reduce or eliminate releases of PBTs;

**Whereas**, exposure to PBTs is a clear threat to public and environmental health, local PBT contamination has a disproportionate impact on children, low-income and minority communities, PBT exposure affects all residents of the County of Alameda and the Bay Area; and pollution prevention strategies exist that can be implemented by County government and by others within the County of Alameda;

Now Therefore, be it:

**Resolved**, that the County of Alameda considers PBT pollution a high priority for action to protect public and environmental health, and intends by this resolution to encourage the reduction and where feasible, the elimination of PBT emissions; and be it

Further **Resolved**, that the County of Alameda intends to implement PBT pollution prevention practices wherever practicable in County operations and will promote such pollution prevention practices in County-based facilities and health care institutions, other government facilities, businesses and households in the County; and be it

Further **Resolved**, that the County of Alameda establishes the Alameda County PBT Committee with the mission to advise and make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors and to the agencies on PBT pollution prevention policies and practices; and be it

Further **Resolved**, that the PBT Committee shall be chaired by the Director or designee of the Environmental Health Department and composed of the Directors or designees of the Public Works Agency, General Services Agency, the Fire Department and other appropriate county offices, and shall seek the participation of the Alameda County Medical Center, the Alameda County Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, which shall meet as needed and shall seek the participation of stakeholder groups; and be it

Further **Resolved**, that the County of Alameda will work with other government agencies, industry and the public on pollution prevention efforts to protect environmental and public health and to implement plans to reduce PBT releases at their sources; and be it

Further **Resolved**, that the County of Alameda is committed to assisting businesses in obtaining technical and financial assistance for the reduction and where feasible, the elimination of PBTs; and be it

Further **Resolved**, that the County of Alameda is committed to protecting workers' jobs and therefore will pursue PBT reduction practices that do not cause workers to become unemployed; and be it

Further **Resolved**, that the County of Alameda forwards this resolution, and encourages other Bay Area counties and cities to adopt a similar resolution.

ALAMEDA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA, January 29, 2002

PASSED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES- Supervisors Carson, Lai-Bitker, Miley, Steele & President Haggerty - 5

NOES- None

ABSENT- None

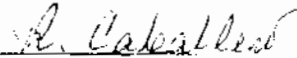
ABSTENTION- None

File: 16411

Agenda No: 7

Document No: R-2002-377

ATTEST



Clerk of the Board of Supervisors,  
County of Alameda, California

Approved as to Form

RICHARD E. WINNIE, County Counsel

By 