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XPSA Contests the Unwarranted Listing of Styrene in 12th Report on Carcinogens

June 22, 2011 – The Extruded Polystyrene Foam Association (XPSA) today released the following statement:

Understandable confusion has arisen from a controversial announcement by the National Toxicology Program on June 10, 2011 that it has listed styrene as a substance “reasonably anticipated to be a human carcinogen” while at the same time explaining that this does not mean that styrene presents a carcinogenic risk to humans.

The facts are as follows:

- 1) There is no evidence that polystyrene or other products made from styrene pose any health risk to workers or the general public.
- 2) The Styrene Information and Research Center (SIRC) has officially protested to National Toxicology Program (NTP) and the Department of Health and Human Services that the listing of styrene is not supported by the science, and that styrene therefore should be delisted.
- 3) SIRC feels that it would be appropriate for the National Academy of Sciences to review the process used by the NTP in establishing the styrene listing, which they say was “seriously flawed”.
- 4) A comprehensive risk assessment by the European Union in 2007 reviewed the complete styrene database and concluded that styrene does not represent a cancer risk for humans.
- 5) In 2009, the peer-reviewed Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine published a comprehensive review finding that “the available evidence does not support a causal relationship between styrene exposure and any type of human cancer.”

- 6) In a comment June 10, 2011, SIRC said the listing of styrene in the Report on Carcinogens “is completely unjustified by the latest science and resulted from a flawed process (that) ignored the preponderance of data that fail to suggest a cancer concern for this substance.”
- 7) The NTP itself noted June 10 that the reports on carcinogens “do not present quantitative assessments of carcinogenic risk” and that a listing in their reports “does not establish that such substances present a risk to persons in their daily lives.”

In view of the known facts, the Extruded Polystyrene Foam Association concurs with SIRC that there is no scientific basis for listing styrene as a carcinogen, and that the listing “changes nothing about the safety of consumers who use some of the thousands of different products made from styrene, employees at companies that manufacture styrene or styrene-based products, or people in the communities in which these companies operate.”

In a presentation to the US Environmental Protection Agency on March 24, 2011, the Association noted the significant environmental and societal benefits of Extruded Polystyrene (XPS) insulation, including its energy efficiency, reduction of GHG emissions from the heating and cooling of buildings, health benefits from resistance to moisture, and extensive durability throughout a building’s life. XPS insulation complies with all applicable energy codes and human health standards.

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About The Extruded Polystyrene Foam Association

The Extruded Polystyrene Foam Association (XPSA) is a trade association representing manufacturers of Extruded Polystyrene Foam (XPS) insulation products and the industry's raw material suppliers. XPSA voting members are The Dow Chemical Company, Owens Corning and Pactiv Corporation, who collectively manufacture more than 95 percent of all XPS foam products sold in the North American market. XPSA serves as the industry's leader on product stewardship, conducting research to substantiate performance claims and promotes the benefits of XPS foam insulation applications. Its excellent resistance to moisture, high compressive strength and ability to maintain long-term insulating power make XPS foam a premiere insulating material for commercial, industrial and residential structures, as well as for critical civil engineering uses. For more information, please see XPSA's website at www.xpsa.com or call 800.978.XPSA (9772).