

THE NEXT STEP

Toward a Healthier Future

A BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE SEBASTOPOL TOXICS EDUCATION PROGRAM



Being Persuasive

One question people ask me is how they can entice others to join them in making eco-healthy choices such as avoiding toxic products and eating organic food. Sometimes they want to persuade a friend, family member, spouse, or landlord. Or they seek to influence their school, workplace, HOA, or community group.

Constructive persuasion has been one of my areas of passionate interest and study, so I thought I'd share some of my suggestions here.

1) Identify what you'd like the person or organization to do. This helps you plan your approach and shape a proposal.

2) Consider who has what authority in your relationship, and if you're impacted by their choice. This determines if you're making a suggestion or request.

3) Reflect on the key priorities and values of the person or group, and how these might connect with your goal. So you might mention how your proposal will protect their health and children; save time and money; make them feel and look good; be the responsible thing to do; connect them with friends and allies; care for the planet; and/or let them leave a valuable legacy.

4) Listen and speak in ways that honor the person, group, and

relationships. It can be tempting to invalidate or attack people with different views. However, it's usually more effective when we can speak calmly and factually, and invite the other person to meet us there. Also listen to their viewpoint, respect their rights, offer useful facts, acknowledge what you don't know, be willing to learn, try to address their concerns, and look for common ground.

5) If they're receptive, look for specific realistic things that they might try. Explore ideas together and aim for baby steps that give them a chance to taste this path and have success. Don't set the beginning bar too high. Also, give them room to find their own way through. You're just offering them options; they need to make the project their own.

6) Get quality information and read critically, so that what you're offering is useful and effective.

7) Invest an appropriate amount of effort. If someone isn't open, then this might not be the best use of your time. Or, if it's still important to you to persuade them, you might consider other means, such as enlisting allies or getting additional information to address their concerns.

I hope that these ideas help you effectively share the great news that we can all help create a healthier future for everyone!

U.S. Government Passes Microbead Ban

In our last issue, we celebrated the news that California had banned the



It's Our Birthday!!

With this issue, we're celebrating 15 years of publishing *The Next STEP (TNS)*!

Our goal with this innovative City project is to nurture a healthier Sebastopol for everyone by reducing our exposure to toxics.

Thus, we help folks reduce the toxics in all areas of our lives — including our homes, schools, businesses, parks, food, and environment.

TNS is produced by a small team of local citizens, working on a volunteer basis (which keeps costs very low) because we support this goal. We're grateful to the City Council and staff for acting in the community's best interest with this project.

Now we need your help! Please fill out the enclosed survey card to give us your feedback about our efforts.

Also let us know how we can best support your toxics reduction in the coming year, including any questions, tips, story ideas, or success stories.

We want to hear from you! Your support makes this project possible. Thank you!



sale of personal care products containing microbeads (starting 2020).

Well, as we're going to press, we've heard the even-better news that the U.S. Congress has passed a microbeads ban. Impressively, the vote was unanimous in both the House and Senate. The bill then went to the President's desk, where it was soon signed.

As we've previously discussed, these plastic never-decomposing

See *Microbeads*, over



Study Finds That Most Cancer Causes Are External

A new study, published in the journal *Nature*, concludes that between 70 to 90% of most cancers are caused by external factors such as smoking, drinking, diet, getting too much sun — and exposure to cancer-causing toxic chemicals.

As for the balance, the scientists estimate that intrinsic factors such as random cell mutations (“bad luck”) account for just 10% to 30% of people’s lifetime risk of getting cancer. They add, “the rates of mutation accumulation by intrinsic processes

are not sufficient to account for the observed cancer risk.”

These Stony Brook University researchers see this conclusion as good news — because it means that more cancers are avoidable through lifestyle changes than was previously thought. It’s just another good reason to be healthy and reduce our exposure to toxics!

SOURCES: “Lifestyle gets blame for 70% to 90% of all cancers,” By Catey Hill, Dec. 17 2015, www.marketwatch.com/story/your-lifestyle-is-to-blame-for-70---90-of-cancers-2015-12-17 • <http://sb.cc.stonybrook.edu/news/general/2015-12-16-study-reveals-environment-behavior-contribute-to-some-80-percent-of-cancer.php>

Microbeads, continued

microbeads are added to products for cosmetic reasons. Unfortunately, though, they pass through wastewater treatment systems into our environment, where they can pollute our water, soak up toxics, appear as food to wildlife, and risk bioaccumulating up the food chain to our dinner plates. A recent study found that a quarter of the fish at California fish markets had ingested plastic! (For more, see the *STEP Online Index* under Microbeads.)

To address this problem, the Microbead-Free Waters Act bans microbeads manufacture starting July 2017. Then the sale of personal care products with microbeads will stop as of July 2018. Next, sales of over-the-counter drugs with microbeads will cease July 2019.

It’s estimated that this bill will prevent 1.4 trillion microbeads from entering U.S. waterways each year.

Miyoko Sakashita of the Center for Biological Diversity said, “This is a huge and important step toward protecting fish, birds, and other ocean wildlife hurt by plastic pollution. I applaud the Senate for following California’s lead and voting to eliminate this pointless and harmful source of plastic pollution.”

Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), who introduced the measure in the Senate, said that microbeads “cause serious ecological damage, hurt our fishing and tourism industries, and ... have already polluted our drinking water supply. By removing products containing plastic microbeads from the marketplace, we can now begin... cleaning up the mess they caused.”

As bill co-sponsor Rep. Frank Pallone Jr. (D-NJ) noted, “Numerous natural biodegradable alternatives to plastic microbeads already exist in commerce and product-supply chains, including apricot seeds, walnut shells, and pecan shell powder.”

Bill co-sponsor Rep. Fred Upton (R-MI) added that this legislation is more protective than any current state law, and will take precedence, thus offering consistency to manufacturers and other businesses. That also moves California’s phaseout sooner than the current 2020, yay!

STEP Stuffer Update

As I was preparing for our annual sessions stuffing the STEP feedback cards, I learned that the City’s new mailing machine could now automatically insert the cards too.

On the one hand, that’s wonderful news, saving time and making the process just a little bit easier.

However, I have to admit that I also felt a tinge of sadness that we’d no longer be holding our STEP stuffings. These have become fun little gatherings over the years, offering the pleasure of being productive while chatting with like-minded people. We’ve gotten it down to a system, and people often lingered afterwards to continue talking.

So I appreciate the new machine. And I also want to honor all the folks who’ve helped stuff over the years, and the connections that we’ve woven together. I hope that we find other ways to continue them!

~ In Gratitude, Patricia

Until the ban goes in effect, avoid microbeads by checking personal care product labels, and skipping those with “microbeads,” “polyethylene,” or “polypropylene.”

And congratulations to everyone who helped this happen. May microbeads be banned worldwide just as quickly.

SOURCES: www.detroitnews.com/story/news/politics/2015/12/07/house-bill-ban-plastic-microbeads/76952400 • www.detroitnews.com/story/news/politics/2015/12/18/senate-passes-ban-microbeads/77581574 • www.ecowatch.com/2015/12/21/ban-plastic-microbeads-bill

ABOUT STEP

The Next STEP (TNS) is published six times a year by the **Sebastopol Toxics Education Program (STEP)**. **STEP is a project of the City of Sebastopol**, implemented by local citizen volunteers. **STEP’s mission** is to support city residents in reducing their toxic use and exposure, creating a healthier and safer Sebastopol for everyone.

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Timely Tips

■ **The STEP Online Index makes it easy for you** to quickly discover what’s toxic and the effective alternatives. See www.healthyworld.org/STEPIndex.html.

■ **For more about local toxics disposal**, see www.recyclenow.org or call 707/565-3375.

■ **Please let us know if you have a toxics question, article idea, or success story!**