



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR
Todd Kaminsky

Kaminsky's Bill To Ban Harmful Uses of Carcinogen TCE Signed Into Law

TODD KAMINSKY December 24, 2020

| COMMITTEE: **ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION**

(Albany, New York) -- Yesterday, legislation sponsored by Senator Todd Kaminsky (S.6829A.8829) to ban the most harmful uses of trichloroethylene (“TCE”), a known carcinogen and cause of fetal heart defects, was signed into law by Governor Cuomo. One of the most prevalent groundwater-based cancer-causing chemicals, TCE has been the cause of many high-profile environmental disasters, including the Bethpage Plume.

“The science is clear: TCE is dangerous, causing cancer and fetal heart defects — and poses a grave danger to human health,” said Senator Todd Kaminsky, Chair of the Senate Environmental Conservation Committee. “Our water is too important to be jeopardized, and our children are too precious to be sold out to reckless polluters. By signing this legislation into law, our State is taking bold action under Governor Cuomo’s leadership to prioritize the health of all our communities — from Buffalo to Bethpage.”

“I am proud to have championed this legislation to help ensure New Yorkers’ drinking water, workplaces and homes are safe, on Long Island we have seen the scale of this risk of this substance in the massive toxic Grumman plume, polluting our drinking water,” **said Steve Englebright, Assembly Environmental Conservation Committee Chair.** “I thank Senator Kaminsky and commend Governor Cuomo for working together to protect drinking water in New York State from this dangerous carcinogen.”

The environmental and human health harms associated with TCE are severe and well-documented. TCE enters the body through air, water, food, and soil — through ingestion, inhalation, or even skin contact. Long-term exposure is strongly linked to various types of cancer, including lymphoma and leukemia, in addition to fetal heart defects. The U.S.

Department of Health and Human Services classifies TCE as “known to be a human carcinogen” and the EPA characterizes it as “carcinogenic in humans by all routes of exposure.” A [2003 study](#) published in the Environmental Health Perspectives indicated that TCE can also cause fetal heart defects. Furthermore, short-term exposure can cause harmful effects on the nervous system, liver, respiratory system, kidneys, blood, immune system and heart.

The EPA has known of the serious health risks linked to TCE for years, but has repeatedly failed to take action. The Trump White House forced the agency to reject scientific findings on how low dose exposure to TCE causes fetal heart defects. On Long Island, TCE was discovered in the Bethpage Plume and was used by Northrop Grumman to clean airplane parts. However, once Grumman discovered that this carcinogen was spreading from its property, it took steps to obscure and deny its use, according to a [Newsday investigation](#).

The new law authored by Senator Kaminsky, which will take effect on December 1, 2022, will bar the most harmful applications of this cancer-causing chemical, including its uses as a vapor degreaser, extraction solvent, refrigerant and intermediate chemical used to produce other substances.

“There is no better gift for the holidays, than the gift of clean water. Banning the most dangerous uses of TCE provides a holiday gift of clean water for every New Yorker. Despite overwhelming evidence that TCE poses an unacceptable risk to drinking water and public health, the federal government has failed to address this issue over the past four years. Once again, New York is stepping up for clean water to lead the way and protect public health. New York will no longer allow industry to use this carcinogenic chemical when safer, cost-cutting alternatives to TCE already exist and are being used by manufacturers across the county. CCE commends Governor Cuomo, Senator Kaminsky, and Assemblyman Englebright for their leadership”, **said Adrienne Esposito, Executive Director of Citizens Campaign for the Environment.**

“New York State has led all year on environmental health, so it’s no surprise we’re restricting a chemical so toxic that most of the world banned it decades ago,” **said Kathy Curtis, Executive Director of Clean and Healthy New York.** “We are grateful to Governor Cuomo, Senator Kaminsky, and Assemblyman Englebright for working toward a time when all New Yorkers can trust their drinking water is safe, and for leading us through a year of groundbreaking environmental health policy achievements.”

"On behalf of WE ACT's members and the other residents of Northern Manhattan, we would like to thank Governor Cuomo for giving us the gift of a future that will be free from trichloroethylene, a toxic chemical that can cause cancer and damage to the liver, kidneys, and the immune, central nervous, and endocrine systems," **said Sonal Jessel, Director of Policy at WE ACT for Environmental Justice.** "This dangerous chemical is widely used in many of the trades and businesses that are located in and employ people in low-income communities and communities of color. We thank the Governor, Senator Todd Kaminsky, and Assemblymember Steve Englebright for their continued leadership in working to ban these environmental threats that disproportionately impact our communities."

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