



News Statement

For Immediate Release

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ACC –REPORT MAY CREATE UNWARRANTED CONCERNS OVER LOCAL DRINKING WATER

ARLINGTON, VA (July 19, 2007) – The American Chemistry Council's Chlorine Chemistry Division is dismayed by a study from the Environmental Working Group (EWG) which is based on limited findings. The study only utilizes water samples that were taken during the annual flushing of the Washington, D.C. water system when higher-than-normal levels of chlorine were used. Chlorine is used to disinfect water and help make it safe to drink.

“Water systems routinely use chlorine to safely disinfect water while meeting U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standards concerning potential byproducts,” stated Robert J. Simon, Managing Director of the Chlorine Chemistry Division. “While some samples may show higher than normal levels of some contaminants, no violations of EPA water quality standards were found. The standards, which have been set by EPA to be protective of public health, have been endorsed by a broad range of organizations, including public health agencies, environmental groups and drinking water utilities.”

EWG measured two groups of disinfection byproducts formed unintentionally when chlorine reacts with certain organic material naturally present in water: trihalomethanes (THMs) and haloacetic acids (HAAs). In all samples, THM levels were below the EPA's Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL). According to EWG, some samples had HAA levels that were above EPA's MCL. However, the MCL applies to the average level of contaminants present over the course of one year, not to levels measured at any single point in time.

“It is important to note that all disinfection technologies produce by-products,” Simon continued. “These byproducts can often be reduced by controlling the amount of organic material, naturally present in source water, prior to disinfection.”

Chlorine is essential to safe drinking water. Widespread use of chlorine for water disinfection since the turn of the century has virtually eliminated waterborne diseases such as cholera and typhoid fever. Almost all U.S. water treatment systems that disinfect their water use some type of chlorine-based process, either alone or in combination with other disinfectants. EPA has not urged drinking water systems to use any specific disinfection method. Instead, the Agency has set performance-based standards and allows utilities to select the technologies, based on the unique circumstances of each system.

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The American Chemistry Council (ACC) is committed to improving environmental, health and safety performance through Responsible Care®, common sense advocacy, environmental research and product testing. The business of chemistry is a \$635 billion enterprise and a key element of the U.S. economy. It is one of the nation's largest exporters, accounting for ten cents of every dollar in exports. Chemistry companies are among the largest investors in research and development, with their products improving the quality of life for all people through essential advances in public health, clean drinking water and new technologies.

The Chlorine Chemistry Division of the American Chemistry Council represents major producers and users of chlorine in the United States. The chlor-alkali industry contributes over \$2 billion to the North American economy annually and helps provide thousands of essential products, including drinking water disinfectants, PVC pipe, 93 percent of all pharmaceuticals, 25 percent of all medical plastics and 86 percent of crop protection chemicals.