

**March 22, 2021**

**ATTORNEY GENERAL RAOUL TAKES ACTION TO CORRECT "FATALLY-FLAWED" TOXIC CHEMICAL RISK EVALUATION**

**Chicago** — Attorney General Kwame Raoul, as part of a multistate coalition, today submitted a [petition for review](#) to remedy numerous deficiencies in the risk evaluation for the widely-prevalent, highly-toxic chemical 1,4-dioxane. The risk evaluation – released in the waning days of the previous presidential administration – minimizes or dismisses 1,4-dioxane’s dangers to workers, residents of low-income communities, communities of color and the general public, and attempts to restrict the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) from implementing regulatory measures to eliminate the substantial health risks it poses.

“Exposure to 1,4-dioxane can cause many serious health issues, and its release can contaminate the air, water and soil in places where it is used. The federal government’s previous evaluation of the chemical failed to take into account the dangers it poses to workers and residents of communities of color and vulnerable communities,” Raoul said. “The federal government should reassess its use to ensure that the risk evaluation of 1,4-dioxane comprehensively covers the methods that people are exposed to this chemical.”

Raoul and the coalition seek to support the Biden administration’s anticipated efforts to correct the deficiencies in the 1,4-dioxane risk evaluation. Exposure to 1,4-dioxane poses serious harm to human health, including negative nervous system effects; liver, kidney and lung degeneration; and death. The EPA classifies 1,4-dioxane as “likely to be carcinogenic to humans.” 1,4-dioxane is widely used, among other things, in a variety of commercial and industrial applications. The chemical is also a byproduct of the breakdown of other chemicals in a variety of consumer products, including detergents, household cleaners and personal care products. 1,4-dioxane can be released into the air, water and soil at places where it is produced or used.

Because of its potential for substantial harm to public health and the environment, the EPA selected 1,4-dioxane as one of the initial 10 chemical substances subject to its initial risk evaluations required under the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) amendments of 2016. That law requires the EPA to perform comprehensive evaluations of the risks associated with the “full range of exposures” people have to the chemical. Raoul and the coalition argue that the EPA’s 1,4-dioxane risk evaluation excludes many significant exposure pathways through which people are exposed to the chemical – such as contaminated drinking water, air, or soil. The EPA’s risk evaluation under the former administration found no “unreasonable risk” to the general public from 1,4-dioxane’s uses, but the exposure examined by the agency was limited to recreational swimming and did not include all the other, more important, ways – including drinking contaminated water – that 1,4-dioxane may harm people’s health.

Raoul and the coalition also argue that in violating the TSCA and EPA regulations, the EPA’s final risk evaluation failed to assess 1,4-dioxane’s exposure risks to infants, children, pregnant women, workers, the elderly and other “potentially exposed or susceptible subpopulations” who may be at greater risk than the general public. Further, the EPA’s evaluation underestimated 1,4-dioxane’s risk to workers in commercial and industrial settings based on the unfounded assumption that workers will use personal protective equipment, and that this equipment will protect against 1,4-dioxane exposure. Raoul and the coalition contend that the EPA understated the chemical’s risks to workers through these unsupported assumptions.

Before finalizing the 1,4-dioxane risk evaluation, the EPA expanded the scope to cover several additional consumer uses, including surface cleaners and laundry/dishwashing detergents. Raoul and the coalition note that the EPA expanded this scope in line with the urgings of industry trade groups which seek to block

related state-level policies. The EPA's subsequent final risk evaluation for 1,4-dioxane found no unreasonable risk to consumers from the chemical in these products.

Joining Raoul in filing the petition are the attorneys general of the District of Columbia, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia and Washington, as well as the city of New York.