



Styrene Information and Research Center (SIRC)

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**Styrene Information and Research Center Statement on  
Research Concerning Decomposition of Plastics in Ocean**

Contrary to some media reports stemming from an August 19 press conference during the American Chemical Society meeting in Washington and an associated news release, the chemical styrene is not a known human carcinogen and polystyrene plastic neither contains nor does it break down into bisphenol A (BPA).

The press conference focused on new, as yet unpublished research suggesting that plastics – notably polystyrene -- in the oceans do break down, leaving products of that decomposition, including styrene monomer and styrene dimers and trimers. During the press conference, no mention was made of styrene's potential carcinogenicity, nor was there any mention of a relationship between polystyrene and BPA, although one of the researchers did cite BPA as a potential breakdown product of PET (polyethylene terephthalate) plastic.

Styrene monomer is the building-block chemical from which polystyrene is made. Any specific statement concerning the researcher's findings would be premature at this time since we have not seen and are not familiar with this work.

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