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**SCHAKOWSKY INTRODUCES BIPARTISAN LEGISLATION TO RID MARKET OF ARSENIC TREATED LUMBER THAT IS HEALTH RISK TO CHILDREN**

**PARENTS CAN TAKE STEPS NOW TO PROTECT THEIR CHILDREN**

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Pointing to evidence that arsenic treated lumber is a health risk to children, U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) today introduced bipartisan legislation, [H.R. 4707](#), to permanently ban the use of this product. Arsenic pressure treated wood is found in virtually all residential structures, including wood used in playgrounds, play-structures, decks, picnic tables, landscaping timbers, residential fencing, patios and walkways/boardwalks. A 12-foot section of pressure-treated lumber contains about an ounce of arsenic, or enough to kill 250 people. Reports have found excessive arsenic levels in the soil surrounding playgrounds with arsenic treated lumber.

" [An Environmental Working Group and Healthy Building Network study](#) found that an area of arsenic-treated wood the size of a four-year-old's hand contains an average of 120 times the amount of arsenic allowed by the EPA in a 6 ounce glass of water. According to the report, an estimated one out of every 500 children who regularly play on playground equipment or decks made from pressure-treated wood, can be expected to develop cancer later in life as a result of the exposure," Schakowsky said.

She added, "Arsenic can kill, and it causes cancer and other life threatening diseases. We can no longer ignore the dangers posed by exposing our children to this poison. The Arsenic Treated Lumber Prohibition and Disposal act will protect the environment and health of American Families."

The Arsenic Treated Lumber Prohibition and Disposal Act would phase-out the use of arsenic treated lumber in residential settings; require the disposal of arsenic-treated lumber in lined landfills to prevent contamination of groundwater; require the EPA to conduct a risk assessment regarding arsenic; and provide monetary assistance to schools and local communities. Senator Bill Nelson (D-FL) had introduced a similar bill in the Senate.

In the meantime, however, Schakowsky said that parents could take steps to provide immediate protection for their families. Those steps include:

- Washing children's hands or use disinfectant after playing on arsenic-treated surfaces or playgrounds, particularly before eating.
  
- Sealing arsenic-treated wood structures each year with polyurethane or other hard

**lacquer.**

**- Avoiding arsenic-treated picnic tables, or at least covering the table with a coated tablecloth.**

**The Environmental Protection Agency announced that it reached an agreement with the industry to voluntarily transition consumer use of treated lumber products away from wood that contains arsenic in favor of new alternative wood preservatives by December 31, 2003. Schakowsky's said that a voluntary agreement is not enough and that her legislation is needed to ensure that the industry would be required by law to phase out this dangerous product.**