



# Proposed Changes to the Safer Choice Standard

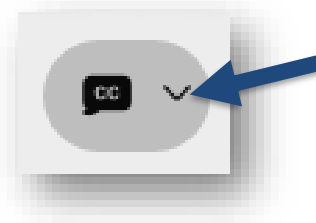
Informational Webinar

December 19, 2023

# Webinar Housekeeping



To minimize background noise, all attendees will be muted for the duration of the webinar



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# Proposed Changes to the Safer Choice Standard

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# Why We're Here



- Provide information on proposed updates to the Safer Choice Standard (“Standard”)
- Explain how to submit comments on the proposed changes

# Public Comment Period



- EPA is accepting public comment on the proposed changes to the Safer Choice Standard
  - Comments must be received by **January 16, 2024**
  - Submit comments via docket **EPA-HQ-OPPT-2023-0520** at [www.regulations.gov/docket/EPA-HQ-OPPT-2023-0520](https://www.regulations.gov/docket/EPA-HQ-OPPT-2023-0520)
- Additional instructions are available at [www.epa.gov/dockets](https://www.epa.gov/dockets)

# Finalizing the Standard Updates



- Review and summarize the written comments received
- Publish a response to comments document
  - May seek further input from stakeholders on key subject areas, if needed
- Issue final Standard informed by stakeholder input

# Background: Safer Choice, DfE and the Standard



# EPA Safer Choice Program



- Voluntary EPA certification program to encourage the manufacture and use of products that
  - Contain only safer chemical ingredients
  - Are safer for workers, families, pets, communities, and the environment
  - Meet verified performance standards
- About **1,800 certified products** made by **350 partner companies** in a range of categories including
  - Household & facility cleaning
  - Automotive & outdoor





# Design for the Environment (DfE)



- The DfE logo helps people find **antimicrobial products** like disinfectants that meet
  - Health and safety standards of the normal pesticide registration process required by FIFRA
  - Other rigorous criteria for effects on human health and the environment
- About 50 certified products



# The Standard



- Establishes the minimum requirements that a product and its ingredients must meet to qualify to carry the Safer Choice label or DfE logo
  - Product-level requirements for finished products (e.g., performance, packaging, ingredient disclosure)
  - Human health and environmental safety criteria for chemicals used in certified products
- Outlines company-level requirements such as annual auditing

# Why Update the Standard?



- Enhancements help Safer Choice:
  - Stay current with the state of the scientific and technological innovation;
  - Respond to stakeholder requests for clarity;
  - Increase transparency and reduce redundancy; and
  - Expand scope of the program as demand, capacity, and opportunity permit.
- Last updated in 2015; this will be the 4th revision since the original 2009 Standard
- Updates since 2009 have been through a formal notice and comment process

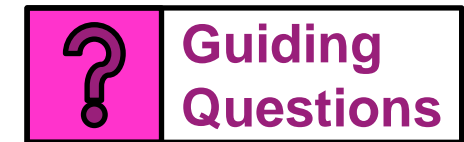
# Proposed Standard Updates



# Overview of Proposed Updates



- The proposed Standard displays updated or new text in **green**
- The accompanying “preamble” explains the proposed changes and includes targeted questions where EPA is seeking stakeholder input
- Today’s webinar will:
  - Focus on the major updates described in the preamble
  - Briefly describe some edits being made to increase transparency and clarity
  - *Not* address every proposed edit to the Standard (e.g., technical amendments or wording adjustments for clarity)
- **EPA welcomes comment on the proposed Standard in its entirety**



# Entering or Exiting a Product Class



- Entering a new product class
  - EPA will determine whether entering a new class will advance the goals of Safer Choice and DfE programs
  - EPA will consider various factors (e.g., product type, functionality, improvements to health and environment)
- Exiting an existing product class
  - If new data indicate products pose unanticipated adverse effects, EPA will discontinue certification of products in the class
  - EPA will allow time for partners to cease use of the product label/logo

# Information to Help Reduce Carbon-Based Energy Consumption

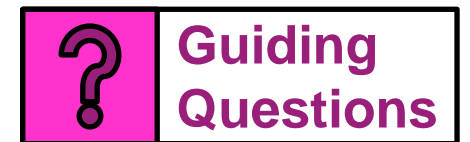


- Encourages the use of energy saving technologies and approaches to demonstrate leadership in sustainable energy use
  - These are ***optional*** and not necessary for product certification
  - Partners may be recognized for demonstrating outstanding leadership and innovation in sustainable energy use
- Using renewable energy in manufacturing, packaging, use, and/or distribution
  - Improving energy efficiency related to transportation
  - Improving energy efficiency in facility operations
  - Designing products that lead to energy savings for the end user
  - Reducing water use
  - Selecting and using lower embodied carbon materials
  - Pursuing other actions that lead to energy savings

# Primary Packaging



- Primary packaging EITHER must be recyclable and contain a minimum level of post-consumer recycled content, OR must be designed to be reused
    - Partners can seek exemption if unable to meet both recyclability and recycled content requirements
  - Label on packaging must not affect recyclability
  - Clear recycling instructions must be on packaging or online
  - Prohibition of intentionally added packaging ingredients expanded to include:
    - PFAS
    - Bisphenol-based chemistries – rather than only BPA
    - Cadmium, lead, mercury, and hexavalent chromium – previously prohibited but now explicitly listed
- Plastic >15% PCR
  - Glass >25% PCR
  - Fiber/cardboard/paper >50% PCR
  - Metal >30% PCR





# Special Product Classes



- Added links in the Standard to criteria for product classes already on the Safer Choice website:
  - Ice-melt products
  - Inorganic- and mineral-based products
  - Microorganism-based products
  - Marine lubricants
- Proposed criteria for pet care products

# Products Intended for Use on Pets

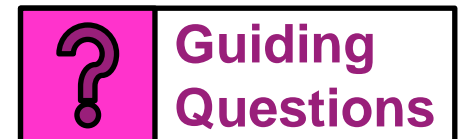


- New product class for non-pesticidal and non-drug pet care products
- Will solidify existing approach to pet care products:
  - Evaluate pet products for pet-specific health endpoints, in addition to human health and environment
  - Prohibit ingredients severely irritating or corrosive to skin or eye or GHS-listed sensitizers unless whole product testing demonstrates otherwise
  - Require all ingredients to meet direct release criteria (except fragrances)

# Direct Release Products



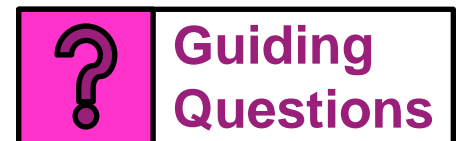
- Direct release products are intended for use outdoors are likely to bypass sewage treatment
- Higher bar in its standard environmental criteria to address the potential for immediate contact with aquatic life
- Stakeholders have requested the addition of a label that would distinguish products that meet Safer Choice direct release criteria
  - Would this be helpful?
  - Would “approved for outdoor use” or alternative phrases better communicate the meaning?



# Disposable Wipes



- Natural or synthetic fibers from renewable sources are acceptable if they meet compostability standards
- Specifies acceptable compostability tests
- Deleted flushability requirements based on new knowledge of impacts to wastewater treatment systems
- Now require “Do Not Flush” symbol
- All compostable and biodegradable claims must comply with FTC Green Guides



# Surfactants



- Data requirement from at least one trophic level
  - Algae
  - Invertebrates (e.g., Daphnia)
  - Vertebrates (e.g., fish)
- Criteria based on environmental toxicity and fate endpoints
  - Where human health data are available, EPA will evaluate them against thresholds in the Safer Choice Master Criteria

# Odor Elimination Chemicals



- Formalized criteria for odor elimination chemicals
  - Definition: chemicals that function to reduce or eliminate odorous chemicals
  - General requirements based on the Safer Choice Master Criteria

# Use of New Approach Methodologies (NAMs)



- To move away from animal testing, EPA has approved several *in vitro* tests that may be used as part of evaluations in EPA programs since 2015
- As EPA continues to make advancements in NAMs, Safer Choice will adopt NAMs into program criteria as they become available
- NAMs are used as part of Safer Choice and DfE chemical evaluations

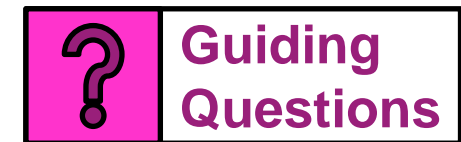
NAMs refer to any technology, methodology, approach (including computational/in silico models like [QSARs](#)), or combination thereof that can be used to provide information on chemical hazard and risk assessment that avoids the use of intact animals.

<https://www.epa.gov/assessing-and-managing-chemicals-under-tsca/alternative-test-methods-and-strategies-reduce>

# Cleaning Service Certification



- Proposing to establish a certification for cleaning service providers that use Safer Choice- and DfE-certified products for cleaning and disinfecting
- Benefits of cleaning service providers using products made with safer chemicals:
  - Improve environmental health and the health and safety of cleaning service workers and the public
  - Allow cleaning service providers to market a green or safer service
  - Reduce costs to businesses by creating safer working conditions





# Other Edits to Increase Transparency



- On-site audits
- Yellow triangle content limit
- Ingredient combinations causing adverse effects
- Products in solid or particulate-generating form
- Safer Chemical Ingredients List (SCIL)
- Use of the Safer Choice label by raw material suppliers
- Private label company dilution

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