

Health Protection  
Branch

Direction générale de la  
protection de la sante.

June, 1999  
Mr. Charles Low  
President,  
The Canadian Cosmetic, Toiletry and Fragrance Association  
420 Britannia Road East, Suite 102  
Mississauga, Ontario  
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Dear Mr. Low:

This correspondence is further to our ongoing discussions regarding Environmental Sensitivity (ES), Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS), also termed Environmental Illness (EI), and the growing trend in some jurisdictions to create policies/regulations to ban scented products in public places. As you may be aware, Dr. Bernard Choi of the Laboratory Centre for Disease Control (LCDC) is the File Manager for this issue and is responsible for reviewing and recommending Health Canada policy. In October 1998, I attended a joint meeting of the Environmental Health Directorate and the Laboratory Centre for Disease Control.

We reviewed related materials provided to me by your office from those jurisdictions that are proposing a ban on scented products. We discussed these documents and I inquired as to the current Health Canada position. The Laboratory Centre for Disease Control's response was clear, simple and to the point: While Health Canada recognizes that a medical condition exists whereby certain individuals would appear to have certain sensitivities that manifest themselves from time to time, with no apparent reason, the etiology of this apparent sensitized state is hitherto unknown. In short, there is very little medical or scientific evidence at this time to support a link between MCS, ES and environmental exposure to any specific agent(s), be they in the form of industrial chemicals, food additives, scented products, or otherwise.

At this time Health Canada has no plans to develop a formal policy in this area, but continues to study the phenomenon that results in the sensitized state exhibited by certain individuals. Sincerely,

(original signed by Hugh G. Davis)

Hugh G. Davis  
A/Head,  
Microbiology and Cosmetics,  
Product Safety Bureau,  
Environmental Health Directorate

CC:  
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