

Better science, please

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Just when you thought that the industry that made money on bisphenol A could not have been any cozier with the federal agency regulating the chemical comes another revelation. Cozy? How about joined at the hip?

An article Sunday by Milwaukee Journal Sentinel reporters Susanne Rust and Meg Kissinger uncovers disturbing e-mails between the U.S. [Food and Drug Administration](#) and chemical industry lobbyists. The gist: the FDA relying on lobbyists to evaluate the chemical's risks, track legislation to ban it and monitor press coverage.

BPA is a common product found in food product containers. It has been linked to neurological defects, diabetes, some cancers and heart disease. Young children are particularly vulnerable.

We repeat our call for Congress to act swiftly on legislation in both houses to ban the chemical from all food and beverage containers. Yes, young children are more at risk, but given the inadequacy of the "science" the FDA has relied upon to judge BPA, banning it completely is the most prudent action. The chemical has been detected in the urine of 93 percent of Americans tested.

The FDA has relied primarily on two studies funded by a trade association for makers of BPA. In April, an international consortium of scientists rejected the government's use of those studies.

These latest e-mails reveal an agency less concerned with consumer safety than with how the chemical's maker viewed the product's safety.

This makes about as much sense as asking the oil industry to craft energy legislation. Oh, right. That happened, too.

The e-mails reveal access for the industry that far exceeded any available to those who might have had more balanced or contrary views. That's not regulation. It's a rubber stamp.

Past administrations have simply been too content to rely on regulated industries to offer advice on their own regulation or have put too much confidence in these industries' abilities to self-police. Both strategies involve too much risk for the consumer.

The Obama administration says it wants to give science its proper due in policy-making. And on stem cells and climate change, it appears the president is serious. Turning his attention to the FDA in this regard is a logical next step.

We challenge Congress to be just as serious. Ban [BPA](#).

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