

Next PCTC meeting will be Wed., February 15, 2006 from 3PM to 6PM, in Charlotte.

The PCTC is in the process of completing our PAH study in Austin. More info to come.

PAH is an abbreviation for Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbon

What does;
Forest fires, dandruff shampoos, car exhaust, grilled foods, asphalt pavements, camp fires, truck exhaust, asphalt rooftops, used motor oil, fireplaces, charcoal for grilling, vehicle tires, and driveway sealer have in common??
They all contain or are sources of PAHs!!!!

City of Austin PAH Update

The City of Austin (COA) passed a ban on the use of coal tar sealants effective January 1st 2006. It affects the City of Austin and surrounding watershed jurisdiction. The ban is based on studies performed by the COA Watershed Protection and Development Review Department (WPDRD) and the United States Geological Survey (USGS). City personnel reached the following conclusions:

- That high concentrations of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH's) are present in sediments within the Austin waterways.
- The primary source of these PAH's were parking lots that were sealed with coal tar emulsion.
- A ban on coal tar sealants will significantly change sediment quality in Austin and protect organisms in the streams.

The PCTC strongly disputes the conclusions reached by the City of Austin for the following reasons:

1. The study by the City of Austin is incomplete and did not conclusively identify the source of PAH's found in the streams sediments to be from coal tar sealers.
2. Current publications on urban PAH sources including those from the USGS do not support the City of Austin conclusion that coal tar sealants are the major urban source of PAH's.
3. USGS researchers stated, subsequent to the ban, that overall sediment levels of PAH's in Austin waterways are not high relative to other cities.
4. The sources and contribution of all PAHs should be examined to quantify their contribution to the Austin area watershed.
5. Data from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Texas Transportation Institute indicate that 1300 kg (2800 lbs) per year of PAH's are produced from City of Austin traffic which is 130 times greater than PAH runoff from coal tar sealed parking lots.
6. The alternative risks associated with the ban such as rapid deterioration of asphalt based sealant and degradation of unsealed asphalt pavement were not considered.
7. Sealants that are allowed, primarily asphalt sealer, are a source of PAH's according to the City of Austin data.
8. The adverse economic impact by requiring the usage of a less durable product requiring more frequent application was not considered.