



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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***WAS OXYBENZONE, A COMMON CHEMICAL SUNSCREEN INGREDIENT,
REALLY BANNED IN HAWAII?***

Boulder, CO (April 28, 2017) - Every year, millions of people venture onto the beach and into the ocean. These same millions also unknowingly cause serious harm to the very thing they're enjoying. Thousands of tons of toxic chemical sunscreens end up in the ocean annually, with 14,000 tons of it making its way to coral reefs. Common chemical sunscreens like oxybenzone, octinoxate and others are killing corals reefs at an alarming rate and posing serious risks to other ocean life.

These chemicals are so toxic that a group of senators from Hawaii introduced a ban on oxybenzone and others that are known to harm coral reefs. Cheryl M. Woodley, Ph.D., a top scientist at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), is backing the pending legislative ban, and sent a letter about oxybenzone to all the senators. The letter stated, "The preponderance of scientific evidence indicates that oxybenzone is toxic to coral and threatens overall coral reef health by:

- inducing coral bleaching;
- harming or killing coral larvae by inducing gross deformities, DNA damage, and bleaching;
- acting as an endocrine disruptor; and
- bioaccumulating in coral tissue."

Opponents for the bill are calling for more studies, but with reefs disappearing twice as fast as rainforests, speedy action will be key to the reefs' survival. In Woodley's letter to the Hawaiian senators, she explained, "While additional research may incrementally add to our understanding of its impacts to additional coral reef species, additional research on the impacts of oxybenzone should not be a prerequisite to management action."

Craig Downs, Ph.D., Executive Director of Haereticus Environmental Lab, is leading the charge on the effects of chemical sunscreens. The most worrisome, according to his research, is oxybenzone, aka benzophenone-3, which is extremely common in chemical sunscreens, lip balms and cosmetics. Oxybenzone works by absorbing UV radiation, but Downs says it can be harmful to coral (especially baby coral), fish, sea urchins and other aquatic animals.

Aside from calling for additional studies, arguments against the ban cite the need for sunscreen to prevent burns and protect against skin cancer; however, natural mineral sunscreens containing zinc and titanium are readily available. They offer natural broad-spectrum sun protection and are safe for reefs and marine life.

“Natural mineral sunscreens have always been the better choice,” said Nova Covington, Founder and CEO of Goddess Garden, a natural mineral sunscreen company. “Now we know it is even more important to avoid chemical sunscreens.”

Chemicals in sunscreen can either wash off while swimming, or enter the water through sewage, shower drains or runoff. Even inland, the oxybenzone can make its way to the ocean since the chemical is not filtered out. According to Downs, this is contributing to continual reef damage.

“At Goddess Garden Organics, we make reef-friendly natural mineral sunscreens that keep people protected from UVA and UVB rays, but doesn’t harm coral reefs or fish,” said Nova. “Beyond that, we also established a nonprofit foundation, *Protect Our Mother*, that will help protect coral reefs and educate the public about this environmental threat.”

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The Roots of Goddess Garden Organics:

Founder of Goddess Garden, Nova Covington, was inspired to develop safe skincare solutions, using pure minerals for sun protection, after her daughter had a serious reaction to conventional skincare products. With support from her biochemist husband and formulator, Paul Halter, Goddess Garden became the largest organic sunscreen brand. Goddess Garden Organics is a women-owned business, certified by the Woman’s Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC), and a certified B Corporation. Nova also established a foundation in 2017, *Protect Our Mother*, to help fund projects that protect the coral reefs and clean up the oceans. The full Goddess Garden sun care line is carried in nearly 18,000 stores including Whole Foods, CVS, Walgreens, Target, Wegmans, REI, Sprouts Farmers Market, Kroger, Harris Teeter and many other natural retailers throughout the U.S. and Canada.

For more information, please visit www.GoddessGarden.com.