Burden of Proof Encyclopedia Article

Burden of Proof

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The current regulatory system, following traditional legal processes, generally assumes that **chemicals** are innocent, or not harmful, until proven guilty. Thus, the burden to show proof that a chemical is harmful to human and/or **ecosystem health** falls on those who regulate or are affected by these chemicals. As evidence increases that many of the more than 70,000 chemicals in the marketplace today—and the 10,000 more introduced each year—are causing health effects in various **species**, including humans, new regulations are being proposed that would reverse this burden to the manufacturer, importer or user of the chemical and its byproducts. They would then have to prove before its production and distribution that the chemical will not be harmful to human health and the **environment**.