

For Immediate Release
August 27, 2019

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Council for LAB/LAS Environmental Research Publishes New Research

New studies demonstrate that even the lack of oxygen is no obstacle to microbial breakdown

WASHINGTON, D.C. (August 27, 2019) – The Council for LAB/LAS Environmental Research (CLER) is today releasing two new research studies on linear alkylbenzene sulfonate (LAS), a major cleaning agent (surfactant) used in laundry detergents and cleaning products worldwide. The studies summarize newly available data, and provide analysis and commentary, demonstrating that LAS undergoes microbial breakdown in freshwater environments even in the absence of air (anaerobic biodegradation). The freshwater environments are in bioreactors, vessels designed to facilitate wastewater treatment.

Anaerobic biodegradability is a pass/fail criterion for eco-label programs such as the EU Flower and the Nordic Swan. Neither program yet recognizes LAS as anaerobically biodegradable.

Previous research demonstrates that LAS undergoes microbial breakdown everywhere in the environment that air (oxygen) is present (aerobic biodegradation). Aerobic biodegradation is an important process to reduce substances in the environment to harmless levels.

The new studies were presented at the [CESIO World Surfactants Congress](#), June 3-5, 2019 in Munich, Germany and are now available on the CLER website.

To download a copy of the poster presentation which summarizes the extensive data demonstrating LAS anaerobic biodegradation in bio-reactors, [click here](#).

To download a copy of the PowerPoint presentation which provides analysis of the findings and the challenges these posed to eco-label programs that incorrectly consider LAS to be not anaerobically biodegradable, [click here](#).

The new studies complement recent research conducted by the University of Cadiz (Spain) which demonstrates that LAS undergoes anaerobic biodegradation in marine sediments (Corada-Fernandez et al. 2018). An earlier version of this paper was presented in [Volume 15](#) of The CLER Review, CLER's technical journal. The new studies demonstrate that LAS is capable of undergoing anaerobic biodegradation in marine and freshwater environments.

About CLER

The Council for LAB/LAS Environmental Research (CLER) is an organization of scientists and technical specialists representing manufacturers of linear alkylbenzene (LAB) and linear alkylbenzene sulfonate (LAS). CLER's mission is to conduct research and distribute scientific information on the environmental safety of LAS, the world's number one cleaning ingredient, and LAB, the material from which it is produced. To learn more, visit www.cler.com.

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