

Viewpoint: 'Toxic' chemicals fueled post-WWII economic boom in the United States—here's why that's a problem

[B]efore [World War II], the vast majority of Americans lived in cities, or they lived on farms. Suddenly, with all these bright, shiny new roads, millions of veterans returning from the war discovered they had a third option: they could move their families to new communities built “out in the country”. Developers began the feverish transformation of farms and forests into subdivisions, and the era of suburban sprawl had begun. The results of this staggering land transformation include the economic devastation of our older cities; the virtual eradication of local food production; and the transformation of forests and farms into ever-expanding subdivisions and shopping malls.

Cities such as Detroit lost many hundreds of thousands of residents. And as the changes turned the United States into a nation of suburban consumers, industry – notably the chemical industry – responded by creating products to satisfy our every urge. Petrochemicals, it turned out, could be used to make everything, from lipstick and water bottles to processed food and cheap hamburgers, made with beef reared in concentrated feeding operations on corn partly made of synthetic fertilizers and weedkillers.

Read full, original article: [From lipstick to burgers: how our lives have become so chemical dependent](#)