



Oregon
Environmental
Council
It's Your Oregon



Toxic chemicals should not be found in Oregonians' homes and bodies or in Oregon's rivers and wildlife. In particular, we must protect our children, who are routinely exposed to hazardous industrial chemicals that leach out of products they encounter every day: plastic containers, toys, jewelry, baby bottles and water bottles, shampoos, lotions, and thousands more.

HB 2367 and HB 2792: Protecting Children from Toxic Chemicals

HB 2367 and HB 2792 will protect children from toxic chemicals in toys and other products by:

- Requiring the Department of Human Services (DHS) to identify chemicals in consumer products that are of high concern for children's health.
- Requiring manufacturers to notify DHS when chemicals of high concern are found in their children's products.
- Prohibiting the use of known dangerous chemicals prevalent in children's products, including phthalates and bisphenol A.
- Providing consumers with information to make safer buying choices.
- Facilitating information sharing with other states that have passed similar laws, to prevent duplicating efforts.
- Implementing and enforcing these provision will require 2 FTEs at DHS .

Children Are the Most Vulnerable; Laws Don't Adequately Protect Them

Because children's bodies are growing and developing, they are more vulnerable to the effects of toxic chemicals than adults. Even small amounts of a chemical can impact a child's ability to reach his or her full potential. Safety regulations for today's toys

and other products designed for kids inadequately address the presence of chemicals linked to harmful health and developmental impacts for children. **HB 2367 and HB 2792 close the loopholes in these regulations.**

It's Not Just About Lead from China

While many recently recalled toys were manufactured in China where materials and labor are cheap and regulations are lax, the problem of toxic toys isn't just about lead from China. Many children's products — toys, baby bottles, car safety seats, baby shampoos, and clothing — contain toxic chemicals linked to a wide array of health effects, including reproductive problems, learning disabilities, hormone problems, and cancer. Children are uniquely vulnerable to toxic chemicals, which can disrupt their development and cause lifelong health problems.

No Government Oversight of Toxic Chemicals in Consumer Products

Why is it that in 2008 children's products containing toxic chemicals still make it to store shelves and into our homes? The frightening answer is that there is little federal or state government oversight on toxic chemicals in children's products.

The time is right for Oregon to make kids' products safe for kids.

Safer Products Are Possible

In recent testing of over 1,200 popular children's toys, 60% of the products tested contained lead, cadmium, arsenic, mercury or PVC. Washington State has already phased out a handful of the worst chemicals. And other states and federal agencies have compiled research on many other chemicals — research showing which are clearly harmful and which are safer.

States Are Taking Action Now

Fortunately, states are taking action where the federal government has failed to protect children from harmful chemicals in everyday consumer products. California, New York and Michigan have stepped up to regulate jewelry and other products by limiting lead content. Numerous states are considering laws to regulate chemicals in products, including Massachusetts, California, Connecticut, and Minnesota.

The Cost of Inaction

Protecting environmental public health saves lives and money. According to OEC's February 2008 report *The Price of Pollution*, Oregonians spend at least \$1.57 billion annually on preventable disease caused by pollution. This includes direct costs such as hospitalization and indirect costs such as special needs education and lost earning potential. Typically, decision makers consider only the upfront costs of implementing environmental health protection measures designed to reduce pollution, ignoring the financial impacts of inaction.

Oregon Should Not Wait to Act

While there are thousands of toxic chemicals on the market and many are in products our children sleep on, put in their mouths, play with, and wear every day, there is no federal or state system in place to ensure that these products are safe. The same chemicals in these products end up as a waste problem in landfills and incinerators and a contamination problem in our rivers, lakes, and streams. We also know these same chemicals are building up in the food chain and in our bodies.

We **can** take advantage of the best scientific research compiled by authoritative government agencies to phase out the worst chemicals that endanger our children, while at the same time creating new economic opportunities for innovative Oregon companies to develop safer products.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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