



The Alliance for a **HEALTHY TOMORROW**

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News Release

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Majority of Legislators Support Bill That Would Replace Toxic Chemicals with Safer Alternatives in Common Household Goods

(Boston, MA) As the European Union moves ahead with new reforms that modernize toxic chemical policies, momentum builds in Massachusetts for similar measures that would replace commonly used toxic chemicals with safer alternatives. A majority of legislators in both houses of the Massachusetts legislature are co-sponsoring "*An Act for a Healthy Massachusetts: Safer Alternatives to Toxic Chemicals.*" The bill, sponsored by Representative Jay Kaufman (D-Lexington) and Senator Steven Tolman (D-Brighton) initially targets 10 of the worst toxic chemicals found in common household products such as dry cleaning, pesticides, solvents, building materials, foam cushions, and electronics. It would mandate a careful process to evaluate alternatives to these chemicals and replace them with safer alternatives where feasible. It would also assist businesses in the transition and increase the competitiveness of Massachusetts businesses internationally. So far the bill has been co-sponsored by 83 (of 160) Representatives and 25 (of 40) Senators.

"The United States is becoming a dumping ground for common household products with toxic ingredients exported here from countries that ban their local sale," said Deborah Shields, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Breast Cancer Coalition. "If China and Europe can protect the health of their citizens from hazards like formaldehyde in plywood cabinets, why are we lagging so far behind?"

Countries around the globe are taking steps to prevent harm to health from toxic hazards by phasing out the use of toxic chemicals. Because the United States is lagging behind, these countries can continue to sell toxic products here. Last month, the European Parliament gave final approval to a sweeping reform of chemical regulations that requires the chemical industry to gather health and safety data on thousands of chemicals used in everyday commerce, and replace the most dangerous chemicals with safer substitutes. The new standards, known as REACH (for **R**egistration, **E**valuation, and **A**uthorization of **C**hemicals), will begin in April 2007 and will roll out in stages over the next eleven or more years.

“If Massachusetts businesses want to retain access to the European market, which is the largest in the world, they will need to start complying with these new standards within the next few months,” said Kaufman. “We can position Massachusetts as a true leader if we act now.”

Cindy Luppi, Organizing Director for Clean Water Action said, “We applaud the Massachusetts legislators who are taking steps to promote safer materials and technologies here so that the health of our residents, and our businesses, will be better protected.”

“This bill can help Massachusetts businesses lead a wave of innovation that stimulates our economy, increases the safety of our workplaces, and prevents harm to our health,” said Tolman. “This is one of my top priority bills for this coming session.”

In 2005, the Massachusetts legislature funded the Toxics Use Reduction Institute (TURI) at UMass Lowell to study safer alternatives to five widely used toxic chemicals. The study identified safer alternatives to major uses of the chemicals, including perchloroethylene, used in dry cleaning, Di (2-ethylhexyl) phthalate (DEHP) in vinyl products like children’s toys, shower curtains and IV bags, and formaldehyde used in personal care products and building products.

“Now that we have proof that it is indeed possible to find feasible safer alternatives to many of the most dangerous and commonly used toxic chemicals, we need to better protect our health and safety by moving toward the use of these safer products,” said Jen Baker of MASSPIRG. “Consumers should not have to fear exposure to toxic chemicals from the everyday products that they use. With safer alternatives available, we must stop subjecting ourselves to unnecessary harms.”

The ten chemicals initially targeted by the bill are lead, formaldehyde, trichloroethylene (TCE), perchloroethylene (Perc), dioxins and furans, hexavalent chromium, organophosphate pesticides, polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs), di-(2-ethylhexyl)phthalate (DEHP), 2,4, dichlorophenoxyacetic acid (2,4, D).

“More and more research is revealing that toxic chemicals contribute to the incidence of chronic diseases and disorders like cancer, learning disabilities, and Parkinson’s disease,” said Eric Weltman, Deputy Director of Advocacy and Policy of the Massachusetts Public Health Association. “The bottom line: our laws need to catch up to this new science.”

The bill is supported by the Alliance for a Healthy Tomorrow, a coalition over 150 organizations –health, labor, scientific, environmental, faith and community groups—working to promote the use of safer alternatives to toxic chemicals.