



# ECHO

Ecological Health Organization, Inc.

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## MISSION

To safeguard the health and well-being of the environment and its inhabitants.

February 13, 2007

Dear Senator Gaffey, Representative Fleischmann and other members of the Education Committee:

My name is Carolyn Wysocki and as President of ECHO, (Ecological Health Organization, Inc.) I am here to voice strong support for Raised **H.B. No. 7096 AN ACT CONCERNING PESTICIDE APPLICATIONS AT SCHOOLS AND THE USE OF ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE CLEANING AND MAINTENANCE PRODUCTS IN SCHOOLS.**

In January, 1992-ECHO was formed as a statewide nonprofit, advocacy, support, education and referral organization for people with Multiple Chemical Sensitivity(MCS) and for others who care about its prevention. Our MCS members are living proof of the linkages between the environment and health. MCS, also known as Environmental Illness (EI) is a chronic disorder in which people develop increased reactions to various chemicals found in products such as pesticides, perfume, building materials, fragrances carpets, exhaust, smoke and cleaning products.. According to studies conducted by California Department of Health in 1995 and published in *Multiple Chemical Sensitivity Research Reports*, 17-34 % of Americans report symptoms of chemical sensitivity.

MCS/EI affects multiple organ systems (respiratory, digestive, neurological, musculoskeletal, reproductive, cardiovascular) and commonly includes symptoms such as asthma, difficulty breathing and concentrating; migraines; loss of memory and coordination; dizziness; seizures; muscle pains, weakness and fatigue. Many people with MCS have become symptomatic over a period of time from poor indoor air quality such as in Sick Building Syndrome, while others have been made ill due to a single exposure of pesticides and then physically react to low levels of chemical exposures. Sensitized people cannot tolerate most medications for symptom relief, as pharmaceutical chemicals add more strain to an already overloaded/damaged detoxification system, usually causing an increase in both symptoms and sensitivity levels. There is no known cure for MCS/EI, and the most effective treatment found to date is avoidance of toxic chemicals, an increasingly difficult task in today's world.

In this Bill you have an opportunity to not only help create a healthier learning environment for our children but also for people with Multiple Chemical Sensitivity and the community at large. Our schools also serve as a Community Center where various activities and events are held for adults through adult education programs, sporting events, community meetings and family events. Some communities have access to the school library, swimming pool or computer area. Passage of this bill would decrease the risk factor of entering a school building for people with MCS and encouraging them to participate in their children's school activities

Creating a safe and healthier school environment for all and preventing others from getting MCS and becoming chemically injured is why ECHO supports Bill 7096. We already know that pesticide exposure at schools is a health risk and produces acute illnesses among school employees and students. This bill will protect all our children from preschool to high school. We also know that poor Indoor Air is a chemical soup made up of a variety of chemicals emitted by cleaning chemicals, pesticides, building equipment and materials, fragrances and personal care products.

“The presence of scented cleaners and other scented products contributes to poor indoor air quality and is one of the major access barriers for people with asthma and multiple chemical sensitivities according to a recent report by Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (an independent federal agency devoted to accessibility for people with disabilities), <http://ieq.nibs.org/intro.php> Exposures to fragrances can trigger asthma attacks, migraine headaches, aggravate sinus conditions and several MCS Symptoms. <http://www.fpinva.org>

We request that the concerns of the chemically sensitive be considered when developing standards for environmentally sensitive cleaning products. It is with that in mind that ECHO recommends that regulations developed by DPH./ DEP include:

- A. Using unscented/non-toxic cleaning products
- B.A public review period be held prior to adoption for comments and suggestions from the public, health organizations and particulary health affected groups such as ALA and ECHO
- C.Nothing in the standards shall preclude an individual from requesting a facility to use or for a facility from using a cleaning product not on the safer cleaning products list as an accommodation to a person who is chemically sensitive. <http://www.mass.gov/legis/bills/senate/st00/st00553.htm>

Just as the canaries in the coal mines, people with MCS are the human canaries of the 21 Century, warning through our reactions to chemicals that the air in our homes, offices schools and environment is toxic and effecting public health. We are fortunate that Connecticut has taken a leadership roll in the prevention of chemical sensitivity and promoting a Healthy Connecticut through Ex.Directive #14 and this bill.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Wysocki, ECHO President