

The Consumer Specialty Products Association

Testimony Expressing Concerns with House Bill 7096

Submitted: February 13, 2007

To: The Joint Committee on Education

Chairman Gaffey, Chairman Fleischmann and members of the Joint Committee on Education, Consumer Specialty Products Association (CSPA) is submitting today to articulate our concerns with specific provisions of House Bill 7096 (Section 2), which would initiate an environmentally preferred products program for cleaning products used in all preschools and schools. CSPA supports the goal of improving the environment and human health. However, CSPA is concerned that an unintended consequence of this program would be to potentially degrade public health if restrictions would be placed on the use of disinfecting products. CSPA also believes that all companies should have flexibility in certifying their environmentally preferred products.

CSPA is a national nonprofit trade association that represents approximately 260 companies engaged in the formulation, manufacture, distribution and sale of consumer and institutional products. CSPA members make a wide variety of products including household and institutional cleaners, disinfectants and disinfecting cleaners, and multi-purpose cleaners all of which would be impacted by this legislation. Consumer and institutional cleaning products are highly regulated and tested extensively by manufactures that spend millions of dollars to ensure that their products do not adversely impact the environment or human health.

Cleaning and Disinfecting Products Protect Public Health

The proper use of cleaning products and disinfectants are an effective and proven way to reduce the primary causes of disease, infection, asthma, and other health threats. One specific example is that the proper use of disinfecting and antimicrobial products on food surfaces can help protect against **Salmonella**, **E.coli** and other bacterial contamination on food. Disinfecting products are also crucial in preventing and mitigating the **Norovirus**, **Flu Outbreaks**, and **Staph Infections**. Cleaning products also help prevent unsanitary restrooms, which can pose a serious health risks, such as: contracting **hepatitis**, **shigella**, or other diseases related to viral or bacterial infection. Cleaning and disinfecting products also help kill and prevent mold and mildew, which are proven asthma triggers for children and adults. In addition, cleaning and disinfecting products are part of the first-line of defense against infection and disease and re-establishing sanitary conditions in emergencies and natural disasters.

Disinfectant Use Should Not be Prohibited

CSPA is concerned the resulting procurement program and guidelines developed by the Commissioner of Public Health, in consultation with the Commissioners of Environmental Protection and Education, might not rely on sound science and could discourage the use of disinfectants and cleaning products that are vital to protecting human health. Currently disinfectants have been excluded from most third-party certifications of environmentally preferred products, such as Green Seal's GS-37 standard. Therefore, CSPA is concerned that the

resulting guidelines could unintentionally restrict state agencies from purchasing and using disinfectants and sanitizers under this environmentally preferred cleaning products program. To protect the use of these products, CSPA would propose the following amendment to Section 2 of this legislation, lines 27 - 30:

Sec. 2 For the purposes of this section “environmentally sensitive cleaning and maintenance products” means cleaning and maintenance products that minimize adverse impacts on children’s health and the environment; excluding disinfectants, disinfecting cleaners, sanitizers, or any other antimicrobial product regulated by the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (7 U.S.C. Sec. 136 et seq.)

Flexibility Is Needed for Certifying Environmentally Preferred Cleaning Products

CSPA is also concerned that the resulting procurement program could erroneously rely on one third-party product certification program. States that have taken similar action, such as New York, have had difficulties with relying on *only* one third-party certification, such as Green Seal. Therefore, CSPA believes that this legislation and subsequent procurement program should be flexible for both large and small companies to achieve environmentally preferred status. Due to our concerns, CSPA would like to propose an amendment that would allow for flexibility in determining which cleaning products are environmentally preferable. CSPA would propose the following amendment to Section 2 of this legislation, lines 19-27:

Sec. 2 (NEW) Not later than October 1, 2007 the Commissioner of Public Health, in consultation with the Commissioners of Environmental Protection and Education, shall adopt regulations, in accordance with the provisions of chapter 54 of the general statutes, to require environmentally sensitive cleaning and maintenance products to be used in public and private preschools, and establish standards and limitations for the use of products other than environmentally sensitive cleaning and maintenance products. In developing these regulations, the Commissioner shall provide flexible options to cleaning and maintenance product manufacturers in accrediting that their products are environmentally sensitive,

The above amendment would provide flexibility by allowing for manufacturers to certify their products *via* more than one third-party certification program. This is especially important for small businesses that need flexibility in environmental certification programs because they cannot afford some of the more expensive third-party certifications (*e.g.*, Green Seal) which have annual renewal fees. CSPA’s proposed amendment will also ensure that all manufacturers of cleaning products have an equal opportunity to compete for state contracts.

Consumer and Institutional Products are Highly Regulated

Consumer and institutional products are also currently regulated by several federal and state agencies, including the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). CPSC and OSHA have extensive regulatory authority over consumer and institutional products to ensure that they are safe for use by all consumers. Disinfectants and disinfecting cleaning products are also regulated by EPA as pesticides because these products

help control a wide variety of “pests” (e.g., bacteria, fungi and viruses) in hospitals, schools and a variety of other public places. EPA conduct comprehensive reviews to ensure that disinfectants and disinfecting cleaning products are appropriate for use by consumers in the designated environments. Finally, each manufacturer of consumer and institutional cleaning products also spends millions of dollars to test and evaluate their products exhaustively for environmental impacts, safety, and human exposure.

Conclusion

Consumer and institutional disinfectants and cleaning products are *essential* for the maintenance of safe, sanitary, and disease-free buildings. CSPA and our members support the goal of improving environmental health indoors and outside. However, CSPA is concerned about the potentially adverse unintended impacts that House Bill 7096 may have on the public’s health. Therefore we believe that amendments to this legislation are necessary to ensure that disinfectants are not restricted and that all companies have adequate options for certifying their environmentally preferred products.

For these reasons, CSPA urges the members of the Joint Committee on Education to *support necessary amendments to HB 7096* so that the Commissioner of Public Health, will be able to accommodate flexible certification options for environmentally preferred products and continue to allow the use of disinfectants to protect human health. Thank you very much for your consideration of our position on this critically important issue.