

WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF ANN BERMAN, CHAIR OF THE MILFORD ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS COALITION, ECC, BEFORE THE CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE, MARCH 2ND, 2009. TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF: HB 6572 AND SB 919

The ECC is an adhoc committee out of Mayor James L. Richetelli, Jr.'s Office. We have over 430 members of which I, as Chair, am presently representing in support of these two bills.

We believe that it has been sufficiently shown and proven that these chemicals have and continue to do harm to the human biological systems, particularly to our most vulnerable population, the unborn and the very young, by virtue of their small body mass. All ages are exposed to and affected by these chemicals, which have been identified, especially the Polybrominated Diphenyl Ethers, in the blood, and now referred to as our body burden.

I will not go into all the scientific details that will be well detailed by other testifiers. I am here to testify before you the legislator, on your behalf and your families as well as the general population about the warnings of these toxins, their harmful affects and the necessity to protect our health and that the solution is so simple—that of prevention and the use of alternatives, which are already available. I have printed the statement below about the Cautionary Principal for which we all need to be reminded.

**WINGSPREAD STATEMENT
ON THE PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLE**

The release and use of toxic substances, the exploitation of resources, and physical alterations of the environment have had substantial unintended consequences affecting human health and the environment. Some of these concerns are high rates of learning deficiencies, asthma, cancer, birth defects and species extinctions, along with global climate change, stratospheric ozone depletion and global worldwide contamination with toxic substances and nuclear material.

We believe existing environmental regulations and other decisions, particularly those based on risk assessment, have failed to protect adequately human health and the environment—the larger system of which humans are but a part.

We believe there is compelling evidence that damage to humans and the worldwide environment is of such magnitude and seriousness that new principles for conducting human activities are necessary.

While we realize that human activities may involve hazards, people must proceed more carefully than has been the case in recent history. Corporations, government entities, organizations, communities, scientists and other individuals must adopt a precautionary approach to all human endeavors.

Therefore, it is necessary to implement the **Precautionary Principle**: When an activity raises threats of harm to human health or the environment, precautionary measures should be taken even if some cause and effect relationships are not fully established scientifically. In this context, the proponent of an activity, rather than the public, should bear the burden of proof.

The process of applying the **Precautionary Principle** must be open, informed and democratic and must include potentially affected parties. It must also involve an examination of the full range of alternatives, including no action.

The Wingspread Statement was the result of an international group of scientists, lawyers, farmers, government officials, physicians, philosophers, editors, urban planners, unionists, and environmental activists for a conference on the precautionary principle. They met at Frank Lloyd Wright's Wingspread house in Racine, Wisconsin.

Ann Berman, Chair of ECC
77 Pelham St, Milford, CT 06460