



Center for Health, Environment & Justice

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**Written Testimony of Michael Schade, Center for Health,
Environment and Justice, Before the Connecticut General
Assembly Environment Committee, March 2, 2009**

**Testimony in Support of:
HB 6572: An Act Banning Bisphenol-A in Children's Products
and Food Products and Prohibiting Certain Alternative
Substances**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on bisphenol A (BPA) in consumer products. My name is Michael Schade and I'm a Campaign Coordinator for the Center for Health, Environment and Justice (CHEJ). CHEJ, a national environmental health organization founded in 1981 by Love Canal community leader Lois Gibbs, assists people to fight for justice, become empowered to protect their communities from environmental threats and leads national environmental health campaigns. I thank the members of the committee for this opportunity to testify today.

My testimony today will focus on the growing market shift away from bisphenol A in consumer products such, as well as the increasing attention these chemicals are receiving from U.S. states and internationally.

Background on BPA: Bisphenol A is a chemical that's used to manufacture polycarbonate plastic and epoxy resins. BPA is used to make polycarbonate consumer products including baby bottles, reusable water bottles, toddler sippy cups, infant formula containers, food-can linings, dental sealants, compact discs, DVDs, and other consumer products.

Dangers of BPA: BPA is a synthetic sex hormone that's been linked to serious diseases at low doses of exposure. Studies conducted on laboratory animals and cell cultures have linked low doses of BPA to obesity, diabetes, thyroid disease, breast cancer, prostate cancer and other illnesses. BPA exposure is widespread and has been found in 95% of Americans tested including in breast milk.

Canadian ban on bisphenol A: In April 2008, the federal government of Canada proposed to designate BPA as "toxic" under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act and move towards banning it in baby bottles. In declaring BPA toxic, government officials expressed concern that infants are exposed to bisphenol A at levels that could cause health effects. Canada is now the first national jurisdiction to consider designating bisphenol A as 'toxic' to human health and the environment, and to begin implementing regulation on the use of this chemical.

Retailer response to Canadian government announcement: Since the Canadian government proposed to designate BPA as "toxic", there's been a major market movement and backlash away from BPA among baby and water bottle companies as well as retailers in both the U.S. and Canada. These actions are summarized below.

U.S. retailers phasing out BPA: U.S. retailers Wal-Mart, CVS, Toys"R"Us, Kmart, Safeway, Sears, Wegmans Foods, and Whole Foods have all committed to phase out BPA-contaminated baby bottles.

Baby bottle manufacturers phasing out BPA: Playtex has announced they will replace infant feeding products made with BPA with a BPA-free material by the end of 2008. Other baby bottle manufacturers reducing or phasing out BPA baby bottles include Avent, Born Free, Evenflo, Gerber, Handi-Craft Company (makers of Dr. Brown's), Munchkin and Think Baby. Other companies that offer BPA-free baby bottles include Aidiri, Green to Grow, Lansinoh, Medela, Momo Baby, Mother's Milkmate, Nuby, and Sassy.

Infant formula companies looking into alternatives: Gerber and Nestlé Nutrition have publicly stated they are committed to making all food and formula packaging BPA-free as soon as possible. Abbott (Similac), Mead-Johnson and PBM (maker of store brands) have all said they would look into BPA alternatives in response to a congressional investigation led by John Dingell.

BPA in food can linings: In 1999, the health foods company Eden Foods phased out the use of BPA in some of their canned foods. The company has eliminated BPA in cans for products such as beans.

Water bottle companies eliminating BPA: Nalgene, a company that has been a staunch defender of BPA in recent years, announced they will phase out BPA in water bottles they sell and has already begun to sell many BPA-free safer products. Other water bottle manufacturers phasing out BPA or selling BPA-free bottles include Aladdin / Pacific Market International, CamelBak, Klean Kanteen, and Polar Bottle.

Canadian retailers and BPA: In December 2007, two major Canadian-based retailers, Mountain Equipment Co-op and Lulemon, announced they would stop selling BPA-laden water bottles. In 2008, Sears Canada, Wal-Mart Canada, Rexall Pharmacies, London Drugs and Home Depot Canada announced they would remove plastic baby bottles, reusable water bottles and other products made with bisphenol A (BPA) from their shelves. Sears Canada announced it has removed from sale baby products and sport bottles which contain bisphenol A and are designed to come into direct contact with the mouth. Other Canadian companies removing BPA-contaminated products include Canadian Tire, the Forzani Group Ltd., and Hudson's Bay Company.

Canadian grocery distributors and BPA: Members of the Canadian Council of Grocery Distributors also announced they will stop selling all polycarbonate baby bottles in April 2008. Members include Canada Safeway Limited, Colabor, L.P., Colemans Food Centre, Co-op Atlantic, Costco Wholesale Canada Ltd., Flanagan Foodservices Inc., Federated Co-operatives Limited, GFS Canada Company, H.Y. Louie Co Limited, Jean-Paul Beaudry Ltd., the Kitchen Table Incorporated, Loblaw Companies Limited, METRO INC., Neate Roller Limited, Sobeys Inc., Summit-Cambridge, SYSCO Foodservices of Canada Inc., Tannis Food Distributors, Thrifty Foods – Sobeys Inc., and Wallace & Carey Inc.

BPA-free products promotes greener jobs and a boost to the economy: Due to rising consumer awareness, there is economic growth from the market rejecting BPA and through the growth of safer BPA-free alternatives. Eastman Chemical, a manufacturer of BPA alternatives, has stated the company "is excited by the significant market potential for Eastman Tritan(TM) copolyester," a safer BPA-free alternative. Owens-Illinois has resumed production of glass infant feeding bottles for the first time in about 20 years, re-opening plants and creating much needed jobs in these economically depressed times. SIGG, a 100-year-old maker of aluminum sports bottles, said in a statement that its North American sales were five times what they were a year prior. Canada is moving to ban BPA and BPA could potentially be banned under the European Union's REACH law. Banning BPA encourages our industry to become more competitive with our trading partners.

U.S. state legislative initiatives on BPA: Over the past year, a growing number of U.S. states have introduced legislation to ban bisphenol A. These include California, Connecticut, Hawaii, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Washington.

Federal legislation: Congressmember Markey (D-MA) has introduced and plans to reintroduce legislation to ban BPA in key food and beverage containers. Similar legislation was also introduced by Senator Schumer (D-NY) last year.

Conclusion

Major retailers and manufacturers in the United States and around the world are already phasing out bisphenol A in favor of safer products. These new market trends should be reinforced by state and federal legislation. Given the growing scientific evidence demonstrating the health hazards bisphenol A poses, we strongly urge you to take a better-safe-than-sorry approach and protect the health of the most vulnerable populations, our children, by passing legislation to phase out bisphenol A.

Additionally, more comprehensive legislation is urgently needed to reform our nation's outdated chemical policies and get toxic chemicals out of everyday consumer products such as baby bottles.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

About The Center for Health, Environment & Justice

CHEJ mentors a movement building healthier communities by empowering people to prevent harm through programs focusing on different types of environmental health threats. CHEJ works with communities to empower groups by providing the tools, direction, and encouragement they need to advocate for human health, to prevent harm and to work towards environmental integrity. Following her successful effort to prevent further harm for families living in contaminated Love Canal, Lois Gibbs founded CHEJ to continue the journey. CHEJ has assisted over 10,000 groups nationwide. Currently, CHEJ is mentoring community groups in several states including Florida, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina and Ohio. Details on CHEJ's efforts to help families and communities prevent harm can be found at <http://www.chej.org>.