

Testimony before the Environment Committee on
HB 6572
An Act Concerning Banning BisPhenol A in Children's Products and Food Products
and Prohibiting Certain Alternative Substances.

March 2, 2009

Martha Kelly
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Good afternoon. I am testifying to add my support for this bill, HB 6572. I am a resident of Hartford and a grandmother. I am concerned about all that I have learned about this substance in recent years.

BPA has been linked to a host of reproductive disorders by animal studies. I hope that my grandchildren will someday have children of their own. This substance could interfere with their ability to do so.

BPA was originally manufactured as a synthetic estrogen. I am worried that it may cause my granddaughters to have early onset of puberty, infertility or breast cancer because of exposure to this chemical. Avoiding exposure to it seems beyond the ability of any of us by consumer choice when 93% of humans are found to have the substance in their bodies when tested.

BPA has also been linked to diabetes and obesity. This is a serious public health concern for everyone. The legislature should take action to protect us from this by swift passage of BH 6572.

I am also concerned about the impact of BPA on adults. It seems to me that we should switch to safer alternatives for food containers for all age citizens. This bill would be a good start on that path.

I heartily agree with the concerns voiced by Dr Carl Baum in an Op Ed article in the 2-27-09 Hartford Courant.

Thank you,

Martha Kelly
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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Martha Kelly". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned to the right of the typed name and address.

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YOUR VIEW: DR. CARL R. BAUM

State Should Shield Kids From Chemical

February 27, 2009

Despite hundreds of animal studies that link the chemical bisphenol A, otherwise known as BPA, to serious health effects, the federal Food and Drug Administration announced last week that it would continue to study the matter rather than take regulatory action. The National Toxicology Program of the National Institutes of Health, however, has "some concern" for effects on the brain, behavior and prostate gland in fetuses, infants and children at current human exposures to BPA. Canada 's counterpart to the FDA, Health Canada , has taken regulatory action already.

I find even the possibility of risk to children from BPA exposure too great to ignore. This year, the General Assembly and Gov. M. Jodi Rell should step into this regulatory void and write children a prescription for prevention to chemical exposure.

As a first step, they can order an end to the use of BPA in food containers such as baby bottles and for can linings, along with other children's products, and require the use of substitutes that are known to be inert and safe. A bill that would require phasing out products using BPA is being brought to a hearing Monday at 11 a.m. in the Legislative Office Building .

For years, independent scientists and health professionals have warned about the hormone-disrupting properties of this now-ubiquitous substance made by the chemical industry for use in consumer products, including baby bottles and food-container linings.

The widespread use of BPA in food containers is remarkable: According to national surveys of human health, BPA was detectable in nearly 93 percent of study participants ages 6 and up.

As a pediatrician and medical toxicologist, I am particularly concerned about the relatively high levels of BPA found in infants and young children, as they cannot metabolize BPA as effectively as adults. Infant formula, which can become contaminated with BPA that leaches from the lining of the can, is often put in a baby bottle that leaches additional amounts of BPA. In addition, regulators and lawmakers should consider exposures to fetuses, who are exposed to BPA via the placenta.

BPA is by no means the only chemical of concern found in millions of Americans, but it has gained wide attention because exposure may be preventable: There are safer materials available, including glass baby bottles and stainless steel water bottles.

However, no U.S. laws exist to regulate its use, and corporations have little incentive to alter their production practices. To date, only consumer action in this country has prompted change, but it is unreasonable to expect consumers to become experts on the health effects of myriad chemicals used in everyday products. This should be the role of independent government regulators.

It is even more unreasonable for consumers to serve as the guardians of their own safety when there is a lack of standardized and complete labeling of product ingredients. While there are some identifiers, such as recycling code numbers found on plastic products, consumers have no reliable way to know whether a product contains BPA.

Swift action now may safeguard the health of children and future generations. Action on BPA in Connecticut can help lead consumers and parents away from this troubling uncertainty.

• Carl R. Baum is a pediatrician and medical toxicologist at Yale- New Haven Children's Hospital, where he directs the Center for Children's Environmental Toxicology.