



Susan Bysiewicz  
SECRETARY OF THE STATE  
CONNECTICUT

*Testimony in Support of  
Raised Bill No. 5126 – An Act Concerning a Chemical  
Innovations Institute at the University of Connecticut  
and Raised Bill No. 5130 - An Act Concerning Child Safe Products*

*Environment Committee Public Hearing  
March 1, 2010*

Distinguished Co-Chairs—Senator Meyer and State Representative Roy--and members of the Environment Committee:

**I am submitting this testimony in support of Raised Bill No. 5126 – *An Act Concerning a Chemical Innovations Institute at the University of Connecticut* and Raised Bill No. 5130 - *An Act Concerning Child Safe Products***

As Secretary of the State, I am proud to have collaborated with environmental and other advocacy groups concerned about products and toxic chemicals found to be harmful to children.

In March 2009, for example, I testified in favor of legislation that banned products, including baby bottles, which contained the harmful chemical BPA. I commend this committee and the General Assembly for passing that important piece of legislation.

I continue to support the efforts of environmental groups and food safety advocates for legislation that protects us all from harmful chemical additives and toxic pollutants in our food and water.

We must also continue to remain vigilant to protect the health and well-being of our children.

I take this opportunity to praise the Environment Committee for raising these bills and for hosting this public hearing on this important subject matter.

**Raised Bill 5130**

**Raised Bill 5130** is an important piece of legislation because it would empower the Department of Environmental Protection, the Department of Public Health, and the Department of Consumer Protection in efforts to identify, monitor, and regulate chemicals that can pose serious harm to children's health and development following their exposure to them.

Through this legislation, Connecticut would join the states of Maine and Washington in landmark legislation to further protect children from exposure to harmful chemicals.

If passed, this bill would enable our state agencies to work together and in consultation with the Interstate Chemicals Clearinghouse to add chemicals of high concern to the state's priority chemical list each year.

As you know, this Clearinghouse maintains well-vetted priority chemical lists from the federal government (EPA), Maine, Washington, and other states.

Accordingly, chemicals of high concern such as cadmium would be phased out three years after being added to the priority chemical list.

The case for establishing a state-mandated priority list of chemicals of high concern cannot be overstated.

Professor James Leckie of Stanford University has conducted so-called "exposure analysis" studies for over fifteen years and warns that children are exposed to harmful particles while crawling and playing in household dust or tracked-in soil.

His research concluded that as toddlers begin to explore their surroundings, they inevitably come in contact with a wide array of potentially harmful substances--from paints to pesticides--that can be swallowed, inhaled, and even absorbed through the skin.

According to him and other experts, children are far more sensitive to low concentrations of toxic chemicals than adults because of their developing organ tissues as well as high metabolism and skin-surface-area-to-body-weight ratio.

Also, because bio-chemical pathways in children are not yet complete and can be easily damaged, this damage is often manifested in slow learning and mental development.

Numerous studies and experts have also concluded that children exposed to toxic chemicals in their home environments have a higher incidence of asthma and other respiratory diseases, childhood cancers, central nervous system and other disorders such as ADD, and disruptions in endocrine functions.

Indeed, according to several major studies, toxic household products and dust have been found to cause lung irritation responsible for asthma attacks in many children.

Lastly, organizations like Clean Water Action have reported that "chemicals in our homes, schools and workplaces, found in such seemingly benign places as personal care products, cleaning products, toys, pet products, furniture, clothing, food, and water, have been linked to asthma, cancer, learning disabilities, reproductive damage, and a host of other diseases and disorders."

Raised Bill 5130 sets important criteria to help identify potential sources of such contaminants and toxic chemicals in home environments and makes reference to priority chemical lists developed by respected national and international health organizations and agencies.

By prioritizing these chemicals, the Commissioner of Environmental Protection will warn child and other product manufacturers, distributors, wholesalers, and retailers that they cannot include in their products or sell and distribute products that contain any such chemicals.

Strong regulatory and enforcement provisions in this piece of legislation will ensure that manufacturers of products that children will come in contact with at home, in schools, or in playgrounds will comply with the testing and reporting requirements to protect the health and well-being of our children.

### **Raised Bill 5126**

I also support **Raised Bill 5126** because it will authorize the establishment of a Chemical Innovations Institute that will (1) promote research and development of safe chemical alternatives, (2) create green growth jobs and safe workplaces through green technology and green chemistry, and (3) provide assistance to state agencies, businesses, and nonprofits that want to use safe alternatives to chemicals that are harmful to public health and the environment.

The Chemical Innovations Institute at UConn would be a first of its kind in our state, and it would link with resources and information from, explore grant opportunities with, and advance the work of the federal Environmental Protection Agency's Green Chemistry Program.

We must continue to adopt public policies that safeguard public health, protect our environment, promote green jobs, and improve our quality of life now and for future generations.

This legislation sets the groundwork for innovations in green chemistry technologies, Green job creation, Green Chemistry education, and technical assistance in Connecticut.

Accordingly, the Institute could promote safer alternatives for chemical products and by-products for, among other things, pesticides, toxic waste and chemical pollution remediation, and safer sewage waste treatment.

The Institute can be a catalyst and incubator for novel research projects, chemical applications, and technologies for Green Chemistry and green jobs in our state.

It can also promote the development of best practices, safer chemical alternatives, and greater awareness of environmental safety among our businesses and in our communities.

For example, the Institute would update our businesses on changing national and international chemical policies, train them in evaluating chemicals for safer alternatives, help them market products as "green products," and save them money through reduced worker compensation, OSHA compliance costs, and hazardous waste disposal fees.

Lastly, it is my understanding that this bill would allow the Board of Directors of the Institute to apply for outside funding and carry out fee-for-service activities.

Given the State of Connecticut and the University of Connecticut's budgetary constraints during these challenging economic times, it is critical that the Institute have the ability to generate its own revenue independently.

Therefore, I support both of these bills and thank you for moving them through in this year's legislative session.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan Bysiewicz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Susan" being larger and more prominent than the last name "Bysiewicz".

**Susan Bysiewicz**

Secretary of the State of Connecticut