

To: Members of the Environment Committee
From: Mia Davis, Co-Leader, National Workgroup for Safe Markets
Re: *SB 210 An act banning bisphenol-a from thermal receipt paper and increasing the duties of the chemical innovations institute*
Date: February 22, 2011

I am writing to urge you to support the provisions of the bill *SB 210 An act banning bisphenol-a from thermal receipt paper and increasing the duties of the chemical innovations institute*. We know enough to act to prevent unnecessary exposures: There are hundreds of peer-reviewed journal articles linking low doses of bisphenol A to harm, and there are now several studies indicating that receipt papers are a likely source of significant BPA exposure.

BPA is a hormone disruptor with estrogenic properties. It disrupts the body's endocrine system, which can result in negative effects on many organs in the body. This is why BPA exposure has been linked to a range of health effects, from the early onset of puberty to hyperactivity and from obesity to breast and prostate cancers. It is important to understand that hormone disruptors do not act like other toxicants, most of which have greater impact in higher volumes, leading to the old adage "the dose makes the poison." Chemicals that disrupt hormone levels have adverse effects at very low doses because they block or mimic the body's own hormone system. Exposure to BPA in the womb, in infancy or during childhood development is particularly concerning because the body is undergoing critical growth and development at these times, and chronic exposure to BPA may lead to serious and irreversible health effects that might not surface for years (like early onset of puberty, or breast cancer). I am therefore particularly concerned with pregnant women working as cashiers, handling this paper throughout their workdays, and for pregnant customers and children who take the receipts from cashiers- and we know that these receipts are just one route of exposure to hormone disruptors in their day!

It makes good scientific sense to support this bill. Even if we were to take a very conservative approach to evaluating the 200 or so studies that find harm from low doses of BPA, together with the handful of studies that find that free BPA easily rubs off of paper and is absorbed into our bodies, the take home is clear: the links between incredibly small doses of BPA during critical windows of development and serious, irreversible health outcomes are too strong to ignore, especially when manufactures have already created safer packaging and when they can create additional safer alternatives. To allow BPA to continue to enter a person's bloodstream by leaving it in receipt paper is to commit some percentage of the population to harm. When there are other options, that is simply unacceptable.

It makes good business sense to support this bill. For the past five years the National Workgroup for Safe Markets, a diverse non-profit coalition, has urged baby bottle, water bottle, and food can manufacturers to phase out of BPA packaging. We were at first told that it couldn't be done, and then we watched as consumer demand grew and the market phase out of BPA commenced. Even the petrochemical giant Sunoco began requiring customers to guarantee that BPA manufactured by Sunoco is not used in food- and water-contact applications for children under three years of age. The company will no longer sell BPA to customers who cannot make this promise. Companies, and certainly not companies like Sunoco, do not make these decisions lightly. When scientists raised concerns about dermal absorption from thermal receipt paper we heard much less from companies about keeping BPA in paper; Interestingly, some

companies began to manufacture and use BPA-free paper right away, and to promote this healthier option. Clearly, the safer alternative to BPA thermal paper already exists, and more manufactures will work to fill this growing niche and to show that they value their brand reputation and the health of their workers, customers, and the environment.

BPA-free thermal paper would go a long way toward reducing BPA exposure, and simply put, it's what people want. No one should have to worry that the food they feed their loved ones is contaminated with chemicals that could harm them. I hope that Connecticut will continue to be one of the states leading our nation on important matters of environmental health legislation.