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TESTIMONY OF CONNECTICUT PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION REGARDING H.B. 5116, *AN ACT REQUIRING THE LABELING OF FOOD PACKAGING THAT CONTAINS BISPHENOL-A*

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT
March 7, 2012

Senator Meyer, Representative Roy and members of the Environment Committee, my name is Ashley Bissonnette. I am a masters student of public health and an intern for the Connecticut Public Health Association. I thank you for the opportunity to testify today on behalf of the Connecticut Public Health Association (CPHA). The CPHA is pleased to endorse **House Bill No. 5116, *An Act Requiring the Labeling of Food Packaging that Contains Bisphenol-A (BPA).*** Labeling of food and beverage packages containing BPA will educate consumers and will enable Connecticut residents to make informed decisions when purchasing food items for their families. CPHA believes that this bill will ultimately benefit the health of Connecticut's citizens by reducing the public's exposure to a chemical of high concern.

BPA is a known endocrine disruptor; a chemical that disrupts the body's endocrine (or hormone) system. BPA is widely used in the manufacturing of polycarbonate plastics and epoxy resins for food and beverage packaging, canned food linings and composite dental fillings and sealants. [1, 2, 14] In fact, nearly one million pounds of products containing BPA are imported or manufactured in the United States each year. [14]

A summary report of the available evidence released by the World Health Organization in 2010 found that use of BPA in food and beverage packaging leads to contamination of the food product it was packaged with. [3, 15] Furthermore, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have concluded in their latest National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (2005-2006), that of the 2,638 Americans surveyed 2,548 tested positive for BPA in their urine – these results indicate that 97% of the population is exposed to BPA. [3]

Recent studies have associated exposure to BPA with adverse animal and human health effects. BPA has been associated with prostate and mammary cancer in rodents as well as a multitude of other health risks in these animals. [4, 5] Most importantly, even low doses of BPA in rodents have been shown to cause negative changes in the development of the neurological system and to alter the development of reproductive organs. [5, 12, 7]

The majority of studies on the health effects of BPA have been conducted in animals; however, there is new evidence indicating that there is an association between exposure to BPA and adverse health conditions in humans. A 2007 report by the U. S. National Toxicology Program of the FDA found some evidence for a correlation between BPA exposure and various health problems including: neural and behavioral effects in fetuses, infants and children. [12] A study released in JAMA in 2008 found higher urine BPA concentrations in adults were associated with higher rates of cardiovascular disease, diabetes and abnormal liver enzymes. [6] The 2007 Chapel Hill Bisphenol A Expert Consensus Panel found an association between recent trends in human diseases such as

Type 2 diabetes, prostate and breast cancer, heart disease, obesity, decline in semen quality in men and neurobehavioral disorders, with the adverse health effects found in laboratory animals exposed to BPA. [7] These data show correlations between high levels of BPA in humans and various adverse health effects; however, they cannot determine causality. [17] Experts agree that more research is needed to determine safe doses of BPA on human health; however, there is growing body of evidence which indicates that the effects of BPA on human health are "complex" and "wide ranging" and are of serious concern. [7, 17, 18]

Infants and young children are thought to be particularly vulnerable to the health effects of BPA. [10, 15] In an effort to prevent harm from exposure to BPA, the U. S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) released a statement in 2010, recognizing that there is evidence of "potential effects of BPA on the brain, behavior, and prostate gland in fetuses, infants, and young children" and recommended the reduction or replacement of BPA in food can linings as well as baby bottles, cups and formula cans. [9, 10] Moreover, the FDA supports further studies on the evaluation of BPA and is currently working with the World Health Organization, Health Canada and the United Nation's Agricultural Organization to assess the safety of BPA. [10]

Although U. S. regulatory agencies continue to move slowly regarding regulation of BPA, the Connecticut General Assembly proved its leadership in 2009 when it approved **PA 09-103 AAC Banning Bisphenol A in Children's Products and Food Products**, and again in 2011, when **PA 11-222 AA Prohibiting the Use of Bisphenol-A in Thermal Receipt Paper** was passed. [10] This trend needs to continue if we are to ensure the safety of our citizens.

The Connecticut Public Health Association supports a complete ban of BPA from food and beverage packaging. Short of his ban, CPHA welcomes **House Bill No. 5116: An Act Requiring the Labeling of Food Packaging that Contains Bisphenol-A (BPA)**, as a step in the right direction toward educating consumers about the presence of BPA in consumer products, with the ultimate goal of reducing exposure. I wish to thank the Environmental Health Committee in addressing the public health needs of Connecticut's citizens and appreciate the opportunity to take a stance before the committee today for the labeling of food and beverage packaging containing BPA.

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