



**Written Testimony of Anne Hulick, Coalition for a Safe and Healthy Connecticut,
Before the Connecticut General Assembly Committee on Public Health,
March 7, 2012.**

Testimony in Support of:

**SB 274, AN ACT CONCERNING CHEMICALS OF HIGH CONCERN TO
CHILDREN**

Dear Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter and honorable members of the Committee on Public Health,

My name is Anne Hulick, RN, MS, JD and I am the Coordinator of the Coalition for a Safe and Healthy Connecticut (CSHC). I am also a nurse with many years of experience in environmental health. CSHC is a large coalition comprised of over fifty member organizations of health professionals, environmental justice advocates, labor groups, public health professionals, environmental experts, faith based groups, scientists and many individuals across Connecticut that are concerned about the growing body of research linking exposure to toxic chemicals with the rise in serious diseases. Toxic chemical exposure during critical windows of fetal development and to young infants and children is of particular concern.

The Coalition strongly supports SB 274. This bill is a very positive step in the right direction in taking meaningful steps forward to identify chemicals of high concern to children and making substantive recommendations to reduce exposure, protect public health and reduce health care costs.

In 1976, when the federal Toxic Substances Control Act was enacted, approximately 62,000 chemicals were grandfathered into place without any safety testing. Since that time, 20,000 more chemicals have been introduced into commerce and still, only about 200 have been fully tested for safety. Of those, only approximately 5 have been fully regulated. With efforts to reform our federal Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) stalled, states, like Maine, California and now Connecticut, are taking the lead to protect citizens from exposure to harmful chemicals.

Umbilical cord analyses from babies born in the U.S. show on average over 200 industrial chemicals, neurotoxins, carcinogens and endocrine disruptors in the blood of newborn babies. We now know that the placenta is not a barrier to exposure. The American Academy of Pediatrics Chemical Policy Statement reports that our federal chemical policy TSCA “fails to protect children and pregnant women” from chemicals and a developing fetus and young children have critical windows of development in which they are more susceptible to harm from exposures. Is our cumulative exposure to harmful chemicals, even before we are born, a problem?

Consider the following statistics:

- Childhood cancers, particularly brain cancer and leukemia have increased by more than 20% since 1975
- Breast cancer rates rose 40% between 1973 and 1998
- Autism spectrum disorder has seen a ten-fold rise in 15 years
- Reproductive disorders including difficulty maintaining a pregnancy affects 40% more women in 2002 than in 1982.
- Cancer is now the 2nd leading cause of death among people under the age of 20.¹

The President’s Cancer Panel Report (2010) states “the true burden of environmentally induced cancer has been grossly underestimated” and noted that children are at special risk for cancer due to environmental contaminants and should be protected.² A growing body of peer-reviewed scientific lab research suggests exposure to toxic chemicals, like carcinogens, neurotoxins and reproductive toxins found in common products, is strongly linked to the development of disease later on in life. It is time we take prudent steps to reduce exposure.

SB 274 sets up a realistic, sustainable and cost-effective program to identify chemicals of high concern to children and establish prioritized recommendations to reduce exposure. Since other international bodies (including the European Union) and states have moved in this direction, identifying these chemicals does not need to be an overly burdensome process. Vetted, published lists are available for review. The addition of a “Green Ribbon Science Panel” lends further support and top-notch guidance from our own state experts to this process.

While industry will argue that a system such as this only yields enormous costs with no public health benefit, we must factor in the staggering costs of health care in this country. The National Institute of Health reported that projected costs for cancer care in 2020 will conservatively reach \$158 billion—an increase of 27 percent over 2010. A recent analysis by Trasande and Liu (2011) stated that the costs of childhood diseases, including cancer, asthma, intellectual disability, autism and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder were \$76.8 billion in 2008 and urged that pre-market testing of chemicals should be required.³

Federal laws regulating consumer products and toy safety are inadequate to protect children from exposure to harmful chemicals. SB 274 is step in the right direction. It sets up a process that could have enormous health benefits to children in CT. Isn’t that worth the price?

The Coalition urges you to support this critical piece of legislation. Thank you for this opportunity.

Sincerely,

Anne Hulick

Coalition for a Safe and Healthy Connecticut

¹ Safer Chemicals Healthy Families, “The Health Case for Reforming the Toxic Substances Control Act” Jan. 2010.

² U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institute of Health, National Cancer Institute; “Reducing Environmental Cancer Risk” 2008-2009 Annual Report President’s Cancer Panel. 2010.

³ Leonardo Trasande, Yinghua Liu, “Reducing the Staggering Costs of Environmental Disease in Children, Estimated at \$76.8 Billion in 2008” Health Affairs, May 2011, Vol. 30, No.5.