

**Written Testimony of
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Of Clean Water Action and the Coalition for a Safe and Healthy CT
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,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today in strong support of **SB 274 AN ACT CONCERNING CHEMICALS OF HIGH CONCERN TO CHILDREN**.

My name is Susan Eastwood. I am the Director of Communications and Outreach with Clean Water Action and the Coalition for a Safe and Healthy Connecticut, a group of over 50 non-profits working to phase out toxic chemicals from everyday products. I am also a parent of two children who suffer from asthma and allergies, which is what brought me to this work in environmental health.

I am concerned about the overwhelming body of scientific research that links exposure to toxic chemicals in our everyday products with the rising incidence of many serious diseases. Many studies have linked toxins to diseases such as cancer, diabetes, Alzheimer's and Parkinson's as well as asthma, infertility and learning disabilities. Young children and developing fetuses are especially vulnerable; exposure to even a small amount can affect a child for life. In 2010, the President's Cancer Panel Report¹ stated that exposure to toxic chemicals is a serious risk factor for many cancers and called for urgent reform of ineffective chemical laws.

There is growing consensus that the federal Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) does not adequately protect citizens from harmful chemicals in everyday products. Even leading American companies recognize that in order to stay competitive in a global marketplace, shifting to safer alternatives is not only good for public health but makes good economic sense.

Recently, U.S. Senators Lautenberg, Boxer, Klobuchar, Shumer and others introduced the Safe Chemicals Act of 2011 to reform the outdated TSCA. This is a very positive step in the right direction. Our nation's workers, consumers, and children need to be protected by stronger, more comprehensive chemical policy reforms that define intelligent and responsible development and use of the thousands of chemicals manufactured in the world today.

But federal reform efforts are unlikely to pass in the near future so the states must lead the way! **SB 274** continues Connecticut's leadership in protecting citizens, particularly

the most vulnerable, from toxic chemicals and takes meaningful steps forward to identify chemicals of high concern and establish a sustainable process to reduce exposure or give citizens much needed information. This bill sets up a realistic, collaborative system with our state agency experts and a "green ribbon science panel" of state experts to review research and other state lists as well as that of international bodies so we don't have to re-create the wheel.

The European Union is in the process of phasing out hundreds of chemicals of high concern as part of their REACH legislation. Many countries are following the lead of the EU, including China, and U.S. manufacturers will have to find and use safer alternatives in order to stay competitive in the world market. **SB 274** would help Connecticut to lead in manufacturing products that families can trust. Parents don't want harmful chemicals in children's products!!! This proposal helps manufacturers to know what is important to consumers based on the evolving scientific evidence. It is also an economic development opportunity for green jobs growth and will assure that CT products can be sold in the international market place. This will help our state businesses and the CT economy as a whole, as well as protecting workers and consumers from exposure to toxins. Taking meaningful steps to reduce exposure to toxic chemicals will ultimately reduce health care costs in Connecticut as well.

Connecticut has been a national leader by phasing out lead, mercury and BPA however, this is not enough! Parents should not have to wonder whether common household products are harming their children! I urge you to make passing **SB 274** a priority this legislative session. I will be glad to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you,

Susan C. Eastwood
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¹ President's Cancer Panel Report, 2010