



Connecticut Coalition for Environmental Justice

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Testimony of Valentine Doyle
Connecticut Coalition for Environmental Justice
Before the Public Health Committee
Public Hearing March 7th, 2012

Re: Testimony in Support of SB274, An Act Concerning Chemicals of High Concern to Children

Good Afternoon Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter and members of the committee,

My name is Valentine Doyle and I am from Connecticut Coalition for Environmental Justice. I am here to testify in favor SB 274, An Act Concerning Chemicals of High Concern to Children

The result of current government policies is that toxic substances come into our bodies without our knowledge or our consent. The tragic histories of [lead and mercury](#), for example, demonstrate the harm caused when government and industry do not take action to protect health. The President's Cancer Panel Report (2010) stated that exposure to numerous harmful chemicals have been underestimated. Children are particularly vulnerable to many of these toxic chemicals. This is why we need to make a special effort to ensure that children's products are free of these dangerous chemicals, that can impact future health and development.

Approximately 80,000 chemicals are licensed for use in commerce today. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has estimated that fewer than 10% of the industrial chemicals produced in the largest quantities (over one million pounds per year) have undergone even a limited set of tests to assess their health effects on humans. Most tests look only for acute toxicity or cancer-causing properties. Yet recent tests by the U.S. government have found hundreds of chemicals in the blood and urine of Americans.

In addition, many of these synthetic chemicals go into products sold in stores. While the federal Consumer Product Safety Commission frequently takes action to prevent safety hazards in products, chemical toxicity hazards to consumers are far less regulated. No pre-market safety testing or approval has been required under any federal law for chemicals in cosmetics, toys, clothing, carpets or construction materials, to name just a few obvious sources of chemical exposure in everyday life. Products like hair spray, hair dye, pacifiers, stain repellants, glues, and children's toys have been put on

the market, only to be found, after decades of widespread use, to contain toxic compounds at unsafe levels.

These dangerous products end up, all too often, buried in landfills or burned in incinerators in low-income communities and communities of color. These communities pay a very high cost in terms of increased levels of asthma, cancer, diabetes, and so forth as a result of exposure to the toxins that are in these products. This issue of disposal adds an additional urgency to the need to find safer substitutes to the dangerous chemicals children, along with the rest of us, are exposed to on a continual basis.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

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