

To: Select Committee on Children  
From: Gordon L. Nelson  
  
Date: 3/1/2012  
Re: HB 5218 An Act Concerning Toxic Fire Retardants in Children's Products

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Comments: WHERE REQUIRED FLAME RETARDANTS SAVE LIVES

Upholstered furniture fire deaths still account for about 21% of U.S. total fire deaths. Overall California, a leader in fire safety of upholstered furniture, has one-half the death rate of the U. S. as a whole. In 1974, the year before implementation of the requirements in California there were 2500 upholstered furniture fire incidents. In 1987 the number of such fires had declined by 50% and by 1991 furniture fires had dropped to 800 or a 1974-1991 decline of over two-thirds. This is despite the fact that California was increasing in population at about 750,000 per year. Fire deaths in furniture fires in California from 1982-1991 declined from 60 to 10. In 1990 CPSC estimated that in the U.S. there were some 16,700 residential furniture fires which originated in upholstered furniture resulting in 890 deaths. On a per capita basis California should have had 110 deaths rather than the 20 reported for 1990. Clearly California TB 117 has had a significant effect.

It should be noted that 30% of fires that kill young children are children playing with fire. Fire in the U.S. kills the vulnerable: the very young, the old, the drunk and the poor.

REGULATION SHOULD BE BASED ON DETAILED RISK ASSESSMENT

The three chemicals cited in the Act have undergone extensive risk assessment by EU authorities. Many hundreds of studies have been reviewed over many years by experienced scientists in a well structured process. Those risk assessments which were finalized in 2008 found no basis for restriction on use for TCPP and TDCP. TECP was found to be a CMR cat. 1-2 and thus is not likely to be sustainable under REACH in Europe. Its primary use is for polyurethane foam and alternatives are available.

RETAILER DIFFICULTIES

Since it would be illegal to sell, offer for sale, or distribute in Connecticut children's products containing the cited compounds, how is a distributor or retailer to know? Connecticut is not a large market. Products come from a variety of sources. The definition of "children's product" is vague. "Children's product" means a product designed or intended primarily for use by...the parents or guardians of such children. What does that mean? What clothing or toys are currently made with the cited compounds? What applications other than those covered under California TB-117 contain the cited compounds?

10-11-2013

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**SPECIFIC CHEMICAL COMPOUNDS SHOULD BE CITED**

If one looks up "tris" in Wikipedia one gets THAM or the compound tris(hydroxymethyl)aminomethane, which is widely used as a component of buffer solutions. To avoid confusion, since tris only means three, using the terms "tris" as if it means something specific should be avoided.