



**Written Testimony of Anne Hulick, Coalition for a Safe and Healthy Connecticut,  
Before the Connecticut General Assembly Committee on Children,  
March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2013.**

Testimony in Support of:

**Raised Bill 6526, AN ACT CONCERNING TOXICS DISCLOSURE AND  
INNOVATION FOR HEALTHY CHILDREN**

Dear Representative Urban, Senator Bartolomeo and honorable members of the Committee on Children,

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 RB 6526. I appreciate the opportunity to outline 3 major reasons for our support of this bill.

**I) Our federal law regulating chemicals in consumer products is woefully inadequate to protect public health**

Under current federal law, the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA 1976) approximately 62,000 chemicals were grandfathered into place with no safety testing. Approximately 84,000 chemicals now exist and still, only about 5% have been required to be safety tested and of these, only 5 have been fully regulated in consumer products. Since the time TSCA was enacted, our understanding of the health impacts of exposure to these chemicals has advanced significantly. There is general consensus that our exposure to toxic chemicals in products is very likely contributing to the rise of many serious diseases in this country. Household cleaners, plastics, children's products and many other every day products have been found to contain over 70 chemicals of very high concern.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Landrigan, a noted physician and researcher on the health impacts of

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<sup>1</sup> The Center for International Environmental Law, "*Driving Innovation: How stronger laws help bring safer chemicals to market.*" (2013), p.4.

exposure to chemicals in products, stated “Since 1950, over 70,000 chemicals have been invented and dispersed into the environment. Only a fraction of these have been tested for human toxicity. We are, by default, conducting a massive clinical toxicology trial and our children and their children are the experimental animals.”<sup>2</sup>

Under TSCA, the federal government is unable to regulate a chemical unless it proves that the chemical poses an *unreasonable risk to health*. In fact, under TSCA, the U.S. EPA failed in their attempt to regulate asbestos, a known human carcinogen, because they were unable to meet this burden of proof when sued by the chemical industry. Efforts to reform TSCA are not likely to pass anytime soon. As a result, states like Maine, Washington, Minnesota and California have passed laws to identify chemicals of concern and require disclosure from manufacturers on the presence of these chemicals in products.

**II) There is growing consensus that exposure to toxic chemicals in consumer products, particularly for children, is the #1 suspect for the rise in many serious diseases.**

Research over the last 30 years strongly links exposure to toxic chemicals from products with the rising incidence of diseases, particularly in children.<sup>3</sup> Analyses of umbilical cord blood of babies born in the U.S. shows the presence of an average of over 200 industrial chemicals, pesticides and chemicals known to be carcinogenic and neurotoxic.<sup>4</sup> Prevalence statistics show the following:

- Leukemia and other childhood cancers have increased by more than 20% since 1975
- Breast cancer incidence rose more than 40% between 1973 and 1988. Currently, invasive breast cancer is affecting young women at an alarming rate. One in eight women will get a breast cancer diagnosis
- Asthma incidence doubled between 1980 and 1995 and continues to rise, affecting 12 million Americans.
- Reproductive disorders including difficulty conceiving and maintaining a pregnancy rose affected 40% more women in 2002 than in 1982, particularly those aged 18-25.
- Learning and developmental disorders including autism and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder affect nearly one in six children in the U.S! In the last 20 years, the prevalence of autism increased by 300%.<sup>5</sup>

With growing consensus that exposure, beginning in utero, is linked to the rising incidence of these diseases, precautionary chemical policies, similar to that of the

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<sup>2</sup> Herbert L. Needleman MD, Philip Landrigan MD, “*Raising Children Toxic Free*” (1994)

<sup>3</sup> Safer Chemicals Healthy Families, “*Chemicals and Our Health: Why Recent Science Is A Call To Action*” (2012), p. 3. available at: <http://healthreport.saferchemicals.org/>

<sup>4</sup> Available at: <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=newborn-babies-chemicals-exposure-bpa>

<sup>5</sup> See <http://healthreport.saferchemicals.org/> at p. 3.

European Union, should be taken. The European Union's law—REACH (registration, evaluation, authorization and restriction of chemicals, 2006) implements a “no data, no market” policy in which chemicals of very high concern are restricted and manufacturers bear the burden to prove chemicals are safe before being introduced into market.<sup>6</sup>

**III) In the absence of federal reform, Connecticut has a strong business and economic case to protect public health and drive green chemistry innovation.**

Connecticut has been recognized as a national leader in restricting exposure to harmful chemicals like bisphenol-A. However, with over 84,000 chemicals in commerce, we must move beyond a ‘one chemical, one application’ approach. Connecticut has a prime opportunity with RB 6526 to identify those chemicals that pose the greatest exposure and hazard risk to children. RB 6526 takes meaningful and realistic steps to move beyond a single chemical ban and drive green chemistry innovation by:

- Requires manufacturers to develop a “Product Innovation Plan” proposing how the switch to a safer alternative will be made rather than banning a chemical outright.
- Reduces costs to state government by authorizing our Department of Public Health to work with the Interstate Chemicals Clearinghouse, a regional organization designed to assist states with this work.
- Taps into Connecticut's renowned wealth of green chemistry expertise to support Connecticut businesses to innovate products using green chemistry.

RB 6526 can take meaningful steps to protect the health of our most vulnerable citizens while assisting Connecticut businesses to compete in a global marketplace. By tapping into green chemistry expertise at Yale and UCONN, Connecticut has a prime opportunity to assist businesses to innovate, create niche markets and grow jobs.

Thank you for this opportunity. We urge your support of RB 6526.

Sincerely,



Anne Hulick

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<sup>6</sup> The Center for International Environmental Law, “*Driving Innovation: How stronger laws help bring safer chemicals to market.*” (2013), p.8.