

**Testimony of
Environment and Human Health, Inc.
By
Nancy Alderman, President**

AN ACT CONCERNING TOXIC FIRE RETARDANTS IN CHILDREN'S PRODUCTS

**Good Afternoon, Senator Dante Bartolomeo and Representative Diana Urban and
Members of the Children's Committee:**

ENVIRONMENT AND HUMAN HEALTH, INC. IS IN SUPPORT OF BILL 5035

Connecticut is in need of flame-retardant policy changes if we are to protect infants and children from chemical flame-retardant exposures.

However, as important as it is to get "Tris" out of children's products, it is also important to get all flame-retardants out of infant and children's products. Industry has always substituted one toxic chemical for another – and so as important as it is to ban "Tris" from infant and children's products – by not removing all flame-retardants from children's products - industry will simply put another toxic flame retardant in its place.

As well, products that contain flame-retardants need to be labeled as such. It is only by labeling that people will be able to protect themselves and their children from flame retardant exposures.

Scientists who specialize in studying human tissues report that in recent years they haven't seen such a fast build up of chemicals in the human body as they are seeing with flame retardants. The flame-retardants are as potent and long lasting as PCB's and DDT- chemicals that began to accumulate in the environment and human tissue in the 1950's and were banned in the 1970's. Many of these banned chemicals can still be found in the environment and in animal tissue.

Children have 4-5 times the level of exposures to flame-retardants as adults, due to their small body size. Flame-retardants cross the placenta and therefore are in the cord blood of new born babies – and the baby gets another dose of flame-retardants through the mother's milk. As well, exposure to the infant continues, as all infant products presently contain flame retardants – they are in their crib mattresses, changing tables, nursing pillows -- and some of these products contain the fire retardant "tris" – a known carcinogen.

1. Some flame-retardants are neuro-toxic, some are carcinogenic, some are hormone disrupters and some affect the thyroid gland.
2. Flame-retardants are in almost all of our consumer products. They are in our mattresses, couches, plastics products, such as T.V.'s, computers, and many appliances,
3. Products that contain flame-retardants are not labeled – therefore consumers cannot protect

themselves from flame-retardant exposures if they want to.

4. Firefighters have 3 times the levels of flame-retardants in their blood as the general public.
5. Flame retardants should only be used in "high-risk" situations, such as airplanes, cars, trains, etc.
6. Flame-retardants should not be used in "low-risk" situations – as the risk of flame-retardant exposures out-weighs the risk of fire.

Dr. Linda Birnbaum, Director of the National Institutes of Health, said, "**there is no question that the chemicals are altering thyroid hormones**. Altering thyroid hormones during fetal development can affect how the brain functions."

Policies must change –if our children are to be protected.

Thank you for your time and consideration

Nancy Alderman, President
Environment and Human Health, Inc.
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