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**Written Testimony of Susan Eastwood
Coalition for a Safe and Healthy Connecticut and Clean Water Action
Before the Connecticut General Assembly Committee on Children
March 6, 2014**

**In Support of HB 5035, AN ACT CONCERNING
TOXIC FIRE RETARDANTS IN CHILDREN'S PRODUCTS**

Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Urban and honorable members of the Children's Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on **HB 5035**.

My name is Susan Eastwood and I am a resident of Ashford and a parent of two children who were raised here in Connecticut. I represent Clean Water Action and the Coalition for a Safe and Healthy Connecticut, a group of over 60 non-profits working to phase out toxic chemicals from everyday products.

Clean Water Action and the Coalition for a Safe and Healthy Connecticut **strongly support HB 5035, An Act Concerning Toxic Fire Retardants in Children's Products**. This bill would ban any product containing the Tris flame retardant chemicals TDCPP, TDCP, TCEP or TCPP marketed for the use of children three years of age or younger. I commend the leadership of this Committee in their efforts to protect our most vulnerable from chemicals of high concern in items they are in contact with for many hours each day.

There are several variations of "chlorinated Tris" flame retardants. Scientific studies linking one or more of these chemicals to serious disease are mounting up and pointing to serious health impacts from exposure at an early age.

- TCEP is linked to nervous system impairment including seizures, brain lesions, memory loss and learning problems.
- TDCCP has been associated with cancer of the liver, kidney, brain and testis. It also has been shown to have negative health impacts to the liver, kidney, bone marrow and testis.
- TDCPP was voluntarily removed from children's pajamas in the 1970's when it was found to be a probable human carcinogen. It has now shown up in many other products including nursing pillows, changing mattresses, and bassinets. (Hidden Hazards report – see attachment)



CLEAN WATER ACTION

CONNECTICUT

- Both TCEP and TDCPP were listed by the California EPA as mutagenic and possible human carcinogens in October 2011.

The Coalition for a Safe and Healthy CT participated in a national study which tested common items from the nursery for chlorinated tris. Of 20 items tested, 18 contained at least one form of tris, including the two items purchased in Connecticut¹. The report "Hidden Hazards in the Nursery", released on January 19, 2012, is attached to my testimony.

Another study showed the presence of these toxic flame retardants in nap mats! Of the 24 nap mats tested, 22 contained flame retardants and nine of those contained chlorinated Tris. The nap mat submitted from Connecticut tested the highest for levels of TDCPP!²

High levels of flame retardants are added to polyurethane foam found in children's products and home furnishings. In the Hidden Hazards study the concentration of flame retardant was on average 3.9% of the entire weight of the foam! These chemicals off-gas and get into the air and house dust. Dust is known to be a major source of exposure to many flame retardants and young children have been found to have the highest levels. More than 96% of dust samples collected in the Boston area contained TDCP. TCEP has also been widely detected in our surface water, indoor air, and dust. And, in our children! Biomonitoring studies on children have shown extremely high levels of flame retardants³.

Parents are advised to vacuum their homes frequently with a HEPA filter and wash their children's hands often, in an attempt to minimize exposure. Is this a reasonable way to protect our children from exposure to carcinogens?

Certainly, the goal of fire prevention is a good one but it can be accomplished more effectively in other ways. Proven ways of reducing fire-related deaths include fire-safe cigarettes, sprinklers, smoke detectors and enforcement of building codes. Other flame retarding materials may be used in place of foam; wool is a natural flame retardant and is already used in baby products marketed as safer. There are other chemical flame retardants that are safer alternatives as well.

¹ Erika Schreder, "Hidden Hazards in the Nursery", Washington Toxics Coalition/Safer States, January 2012. <http://watoxics.org/files/hidden-hazards-in-the-nursery>

² Caroline Cox, "Napttime Nightmares? Toxic Flame Retardants in Child Care Nap Mats", Center for Environmental Health, February 2013. http://www.ceh.org/storage/documents/Flame_Retardants/nap_mat_report_2_19_2013.pdf

³ Tests reveal high chemical levels in kids' bodies - CNN - Planet in Peril <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pBXvJWWlgss>



CLEAN WATER ACTION

CONNECTICUT

In fact, recent flammability tests have shown there is virtually no significant fire safety benefit to the use of these chemicals.⁴ Since it is the foam and not the outer coating of fabric that is treated with these chemicals, the fabric in these products will ignite anyway. Once the fabric ignites, the large flames are not retarded by the presence of these toxic chemicals. Further, the chemicals released from the foam increase the toxicity of the smoke.

In conclusion, we feel that this bill is an important step to protect our children from toxic chlorinated tris flame retardants in children's products.

We urge your support of **HB 5035**.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Susan Eastwood
Clean Water Action
Coalition for a Safe and Healthy Connecticut

⁴ Shaw, S; Blum, A; Weber, R; Kurunthachalam, K; Rich, D; Lucas, D; Koshland, C; Dobraca, D; Hanson, S; Birnbaum, "Halogenated Flame Retardants: Do the Fire Safety Benefits Justify the Risks?" Reviews on Environmental Health Vol. 25, No. 4; (2010).