



**Connecticut Department of Public Health**

**Testimony Presented Before the Public Health Committee**

**February 28, 2014**

**Commissioner Jewel Mullen, MD, MPH, MPA  
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**Senate Bill 126 - AN ACT CONCERNING CHILDREN'S EXPOSURES TO CHEMICALS**

The Department of Public Health (DPH) provides the following comments regarding Senate Bill 126.

The DPH believes that children's exposure to some chemicals from consumer products represents a potential public health risk that could be reduced by proactive evaluation of such chemicals and the products that contain them. Regulation of such exposure should be at the federal level since these products are sold nationwide. However, the work of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to address this issue under the provisions of the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) has been generally viewed as ineffective. There are efforts at the national level to revise TSCA but progress in this area has been slow.

Several states have been active in identifying chemicals of concern in children's products through the creation of lists and in some cases requiring manufacturers to report which products contain such chemicals. It is important for Connecticut to remain aware of these efforts as well as efforts to better manage chemicals in the marketplace by federal agencies in the U.S., Canada and Europe. The DPH is tracking these efforts to a limited extent already. Senate Bill 126 would create a mandate for the DPH to continue tracking state, national and international efforts, and to develop an analysis of what the priority chemicals and products are for protecting children in Connecticut. In meeting the listing and reporting requirements of the bill, the DPH would indicate how activities in Connecticut could best complement and build upon developments elsewhere. Connecticut has taken leadership in the past in phasing certain high concern chemicals out of consumer products that children are exposed to, such as phthalates in children's toys, bisphenol-A in baby bottles, arsenic in playscapes and other outdoor wood structures. This legislation would enable the DPH to formally identify and report to the legislature new chemicals of high concern.

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Bills with similar intent have been raised in the past but the DPH has not been supportive because the level of effort involved would result in a fiscal impact and the regulatory role attributed to the DPH would be outside the areas the agency normally regulates. Senate Bill 126 defines a role for the DPH (analysis, listing, reporting, and defining options) that would not result in a fiscal impact or require new staffing. The DPH believes that this bill provides a logical and systematic way for Connecticut to develop scientifically sound policy regarding chemicals of high concern to children.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony.