

*Testimony of  
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**Bill 6806**

***AN ACT CONCERNING TOXIC FLAME RETARDANTS IN CHILDREN'S PRODUCTS. Raised Bill 6806***

**Senator Dante Bartolomeo Representative Diana Urban and Members of the Committee on Children**

I am a professor of environmental health and political science at Yale University, where I have conducted extensive research on the chemical risks faced by infants and young children, and the effectiveness of environmental laws.

I was the lead author on a paper entitled, *Flame Retardants, The Case for Policy Change*, published by Environment and Human Health, Inc. in 2013.

I strongly support passage of Bill 6806, A Bill that will remove toxic flame-retardants from infant and young children's products.

Today, dozens of companies manufacture or import nearly 2.5 billion pounds of fire-retardant chemicals each year in the United States.

They are widely used in plastics, foams, clothing, electronics, the utility sector, bedding, curtains, wall and floor coverings, aircraft, autos, and building materials. Thousands of consumer products now contain these chemicals.

Many flame-retardants are not chemically bound to other product ingredients, meaning that they may be released to both indoor and outdoor environments.

Flame retardant residues are widely found in human tissues. The tissue concentrations among Californians are highest in the US, the result of a former law that mandated a higher fire protection standard.

Children are more exposed to flame retardants than adults, demonstrated by body-burden studies.

Flame-retardants cross the placenta and they circulate in fetal tissues. They change the biochemistry, electronic signaling, and normal function of the nervous and endocrine systems that are essential for cognition, memory, learning, and reproductive success.

Toxicological studies demonstrate that flame-retardants pose the greatest risk to the normal growth and development of fetuses, infants, and small children.

Most of these chemicals have escaped federal regulation, and have been largely neglected by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

The European Union has made far more progress than the United States in regulating and identifying these persistent chemicals.

There is no requirement for pre-market scientific testing of flame retardants by producers, manufacturers, and/or EPA. Today, even if a chemical company has tested its commercial chemicals, it has no legal obligation under TSCA to forward the results to any regulatory agency.

Human negligence is the overwhelming cause of fires. In the United States, the primary sources of indoor fires are faulty or overloaded electrical wiring, untended kitchen stoves, poorly vented heating appliances, and careless use of tobacco products, mainly cigarettes.

There is little evidence that fire-retardant chemicals have led to a significant decrease in either deaths or harm due to fire. However, other factors may also have contributed to the decline in loss of life and property.

Increased use of smoke detectors, alarms and sprinklers; reductions in cigarette consumption; improved building techniques; fire and electrical codes; insurance requirements for smoke alarms, and improved firefighter training have all led to a reduction in fire deaths.

I strongly urge your support to remove flame retardants from the infant and toddler products unless fire risk is significant. Examples of reasonable uses include their aircraft, trains, cars and electrical insulation.

The distinction between high and low fire risk situations should be carefully defined, and flame-retardants should be banned from all low-risk products. Governments should mandate that the makers of flame retardants develop substitutes that are less persistent, less bio-accumulative and less toxic.

Thank you for your interests to offer greater protection from flame retardants' hazards.

Sincerely,

John Wargo  
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