

Connecticut General Assembly
Legislative Office Building, Hartford, CT
Public Hearing, March 3, 2016 Before The Children's Health Committee
In Support Of HB5299 An Act Concerning Toxic Flame Retardant Chemicals In
Children's Products & Upholstered Residential Furniture
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Thank you for this privilege to speak before you regarding this important health bill. My name is Joyce Acebo~Raguskus of 174 Eastern Parkway, Milford, CT and Chair of Diesel Cleanup, E.C.C. and a strong long time advocate with CLEAN WATER ACTION, Coalition For A Safe & Healthy CT.

I'm 'shouting fire' here today in support of HB5299 An Act Concerning Toxic Flame Retardant Chemicals In Children's Products & Upholstered Residential Furniture. For starters, flame retardant do not prevent fires. The outdated flammability standard known as TB117 Technical Bulletin in fact does not provide significant fire safety benefits. According to government and studies, on the contrary, when household products burn containing such flame retardants, the fire tends to produce more smoke, more soot, and more toxic gases!

We have learned that flame retardants bromine or chlorine, chemicals known as organohalogens, are indeed toxic and well documented with high risk health impacts, to our families, especially our little ones, often interfering with hormonal function in that they act as 'endocrine disrupting chemicals' of naturally occurring hormones. Carried through the umbilical cord from the mother to the fetus, especially during critical times of rapid growth and brain development, can result in genetic modifications that are passed down through generations. Further alarm on this burning health issue is, it is associated with reduced IQ, cancer, reproductive, neurological problems, and more.

Spread easily from our household furniture, couches, rugs, mattresses, nursing pillows, upholstery fabric, in the like, and into our infant and children's developing bodies. Toddler's have 5 times higher levels of flame retardants in their blood compared to their moms. Environmental Working Group-Duke University,

How does this happen...well these insidious chemicals escape from products like the foam in couches and latch on the dust particles especially when our little ones playfully jump up and down on them and their lungs are like vacuums sucking in the poisonous particles. Too, they touch and taste more of their world around them.

This toxic chemical fire spreads with little regard further for low income families with high exposures from inexpensive furniture and poor ventilation and our workers manufacturing products also fall prey to these unhealthy toxic chemicals.

Our courageous firefighters, both men and women and first responders, are risking their lives on yet another level, toxic chemical exposures to so called flame retardants. They have come to greater risk with increasing victims of many types of carcinomas and lung diseases.

We are indeed playing with fire when we do not take heed for the health of our children our most important products. Here is an opportunity to put out the fire, dampen the toxicity and support with diligence, this very long overdue protective step, the passing of HB5299.

I thank you for all you do on this essential children's committee and I leave you with important informative references:

Highly encourage viewing the film: **TOXIC HOT SEAT**
<http://www.toxichotseatmovie.com/>

Scientists:

<http://earthjustice.org/features/scientists-quotes-organohalogen-flame-retardants#>
<http://media.appschicagotribune.com/flames/index.html>

2012 Tribune Investigation: How flame retardants became common in American homes as a result of deceptive campaign by the tobacco and chemical industries..stoking public fear of fire, to protect.

Todd Stevenson, Office of The Secretary, U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission,
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<http://org.salsalabs.com/o/2155/p/dia/action3/common/public/?actionKEY=18565>

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