House Bill #6516 - An Act Concerning The Use Of Flame Retardant Chemicals In Children's Products And Upholstered Residential Furniture.

The Department of Public Health (DPH) provides the following information with respect to House Bill #6516, which would prohibit the sale and distribution of children’s products containing flame retardant chemicals. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important issue.

DPH supports this bill as it will curtail the use of the most toxic flame retardant chemicals, those containing organohalogens, from children’s products and upholstered furniture. Both DPH and the Connecticut Department of Consumer Protection have increased consumer awareness about these types of flame retardants at our joint webpage.

While each organohalogen flame retardant is different, there is enough evidence of carcinogenic effects, endocrine disruption and a variety of other toxic effects to warrant a concern for all members of this class. Some examples include the polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs), which have already been phased out due to toxicity, and the carcinogenic organophosphate flame retardants TCEP and TDCCP. These chemicals have all been highlighted by DPH to be of high concern related to children’s health and development. Limiting the concentration to no more than 100 parts per million (ppm) will greatly reduce their presence in these products as they are normally added at much higher concentrations (approximately 1%, or 10,000 ppm) to make the product less flammable. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has issued assessments of alternative products showing that non-halogenated flame retardants are somewhat less concerning (https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-08/documents/ffr_final.pdf). Thus, curtailing the use of organohalogen flame retardants will decrease exposure to an important class of toxic chemicals.

Thank you for your consideration of this information.