

Legislative Alert: Toxic Toys Legislation

As the next legislative session is rapidly approaching, I wanted to bring to your attention an urgent matter regarding the protection of our children. A recent report released by the Washington Toxic Coalition found that an unacceptable number of children's toys were contaminated with lead, mercury, and cadmium at levels that were dangerously high.

The United States remains one of the few countries in the world that still allow the import of plastic toys made with phthalates, even though there is mounting evidence that phthalates have a very negative effect on child development. The European Union banned phthalates eight years ago. The federal government has done little to stop this and unless states take action, we will be slowly poisoning our children by exposing them to toxics in toys.

According to Healthytoys.com, one of the only guides available on toxics in toys, there are no federal agencies that require labeling or disclosure to inform customers about the chemical components in children's products. There is also no pre-market approval process for the use of chemicals in toys and other products to ensure that they are safe. The only laws and policies that we have now are reactive, not proactive.

Currently, there are strong bills being introduced in Maine and Washington that would require manufacturers to disclose the toxins that are in their toys and give agencies the authority to require manufacturers to use a safer alternative in their toys. The Maine legislation would require manufacturers to disclose the chemical make-up of their product and empower the Department of Environmental Protection to require manufacturers to replace toxic elements with safer alternatives. Washington's bill creates a regulatory framework that would be able to closely monitor the toxics and ban their use without separate legislative action.

A few months ago, California passed **AB 1108**, which banned most phthalates, a key toxin used frequently in children's toys. As a result, many manufacturers removed the toxin from plastic bottles, teething rings and other toys.

We urge you to introduce legislation and will be there to help you support it.

Thanks for all that you do,

For more information on this issue, please visit:

Progressive States Network, Stopping Toxic Toys:

<http://www.progressivestates.org/content/703/stopping-toxic-toys>

Washington Toxics Coalition, Online Toxic Toys Database:

<http://www.watoxics.org/files/ToyDatabaseFactSheetweb.pdf>

California AB 1108: http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/07-08/bill/asm/ab_1101-1150/ab_1108_bill_20071014_chaptered.pdf