

**Testimony of Randy Tucker, Legislative Affairs Manager
In Support of House Bill 4123
House Committee on Health Care
February 8, 2012**



Co-Chairs Greenlick and Thompson and Members of the Committee:

As you know, Metro is the regional government of the Portland metropolitan area. The voters of the region created Metro specifically to address urban issues that are regional in nature rather than local and to deal with challenges that cross city and county lines. In practice, many of those issues have to do with the environment and the economy.

Among our major responsibilities is management of the region's solid waste system, including the operation of an extensive household hazardous waste program. While this program is an important service to the community, we know that simply accommodating the need for the disposal of toxics is insufficient: in the long run, eliminating toxicity in the products that are bought and sold should be our priority.

For that reason, Metro strongly supports House Bill 4123. We agree with the bill's approach to designate a list of "high priority chemicals of concern for children's health," provide information on potential impacts of exposure to chemicals on that list and make that list publicly available. This approach parallels and supports the approach developed over the past several years by the Department of Environmental Quality, Metro and other stakeholders. That approach identified a list of priority chemicals as part of a comprehensive and systematic toxics reduction strategy for the state.

We also believe that public disclosure of the toxic chemical constituents of a product and their potential impact is both a responsibility of industry and a way to encourage manufacturers to reformulate their products with non-toxic chemicals. The bill applies to children's products because children can be the most susceptible to the effects of toxic chemicals, which we believe makes the need for disclosure especially compelling.

Metro has developed programs to educate residents about reducing their use of toxic chemicals in and around the home. In addition, our programs, like the proposed bill, focus on reducing the exposure of extremely vulnerable infants and children to toxic chemicals. However, educational programs like Metro's and voluntary efforts by individual manufacturers are insufficient to address the problem. Without more government action, children's products containing chemicals that include known carcinogens and endocrine-disruptors will not be identifiable by Oregon consumers.

This bill includes reasonable timelines for compliance by manufacturers. The bill also authorizes the state to share information with other states and we believe that will improve the effectiveness of the bill. Washington State passed a similar bill (Children's Safe Product Act) in 2009.

All Oregon families should have access to information about chemicals of concern in products that may harm their children. We urge you to support HB 4123.