

OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLIC HEALTH

John A. Kitzhaber, MD, Governor

Oregon
Health
Authority

800 NE Oregon Street, Suite 640

Portland, OR 97232

Voice: (971) 673-0400

Fax: (971) 673-0456

TTY: (971) 673-0372

February 08, 2012

TO: The Honorable Mitch Greenlick, Co-Chair
The Honorable Jim Thompson, Co-Chair
House Healthcare Committee

FROM: Gail R. Shibley J.D., Administrator
Office of Environmental Public Health
Public Health Division
Oregon Health Authority
971-673-0403

SUBJECT: HB 4123

Chairs Greenlick, Thompson, and members of the committee, I am Gail Shibley, Administrator of the Office of Environmental Public Health in the Public Health Division of the Oregon Health Authority. I am here to provide information germane to considering HB 4123, requiring the Oregon Health Authority to receive and provide information designed to more precisely protect the health of Oregon's most vulnerable citizens – its children.

There are two components to the health risk of any chemical: the intrinsic toxicity of the chemical and the magnitude of exposure to that chemical. HB 4123 zeros in on those chemicals found on both Oregon's and Washington's list of priority chemicals. Each of those lists was generated by extensive scientific and public process, and each is based on what is known about a chemical's toxicity, including whether it accumulates in biological tissue and how long it persists in the environment.

Regarding exposure, a national study¹ conducted by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention documents that hundreds of human-made chemicals enter the bodies of most U.S. children on a routine basis. So, we know that the incidence of childhood exposure to human-made chemicals is widespread.

¹ National Health And Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES); 4th National Report on Exposure to Environmental Chemicals (2009)

How are children exposed to these chemicals? Currently in Oregon (and most other states), there is no mechanism to obtain information about which human-made chemicals are most prevalent in products that are designed, marketed, and sold for children. HB 4123 would provide the OHA with the statutory tools to find out which children's products contain the chemicals of greatest health concern for children. This could then help OHA prioritize public health protection efforts.

I must note HB 4123 does have a fiscal impact on OHA. The bill allows OHA to receive gifts, grants, and contributions from any public or private entity to fund this work, however, OHA will not be able to implement this bill unless or until adequate resources are received.

I am available to answer any questions you may have. Thank you for your time and the opportunity to speak to the importance of protecting children's health.