



Oregon  
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## **Testimony to the House Health Care Committee On House Bill 3162**

**March 20, 2013**

### **Emerging Leaders Advisory Board Oregon Environmental Council**

Founded in 1968, the Oregon Environmental Council (OEC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, membership-based organization. OEC's emerging leaders board is comprised of entrepreneurs, strategists, community leaders and visionaries under the age of 35 who volunteer in and advisory capacity to support OEC.

Oregon Environmental Council's Emerging Leaders Advisory Board supports House Bill 3162, the Toxics Disclosure for Healthy Kids Act of 2013.

We are today's emerging leaders, entrepreneurs, new parents and voters. Our backgrounds are diverse and our pursuits driven by unique values and passions. Yet we share this in common: we were all born with traces of dozens of industrial chemicals in our bodies. Many of these chemicals, which occur in everyday products, are endocrine disruptors and other toxics linked to adverse health effects.

We are also a generation of change-makers. We are committed to finding solutions that prevent needless toxic chemical exposures. We are committed to putting these solutions into practice in ways that address health disparities and improve health for all people and the planet. Those solutions must be grounded in sound information. That's why we support disclosure of the toxic chemicals in our consumer products.

Our grandparents were the first to grow up with the tens of thousands of synthetic chemicals created during World War II. These plastics, pesticides, solvents, and degreasers rapidly found a place in everyday consumer products. Our parents were then the first to be exposed before birth to these and thousands more chemicals, most lacking basic toxicity data. As young adults, we bear the effects of our own early exposures to brain and body-altering chemicals, as well as epigenetic changes passed on from exposures experienced by our grandparents and parents.

Scientific studies in the past two decades make us among the first to wonder: Was my childhood learning disability or my current infertility related to the flame retardants in my crib, the plastic in my bath toys, or some beloved trinket that came home as a birthday party favor? Was my leukemia at age four a consequence of an environmental exposure that occurred before I was born? Are my friends getting breast cancer in their 30's and 40's from a lifetime of lotions and shampoos? Will my child one day suffer because of something I bought or some place that I lived?

There is much we don't know—but we do know enough to be committed to change. Current regulations are not sufficient to ensure that everyday products on the supermarket shelf are truly safe. Potential risks are hidden, so even the savviest consumer can't make informed choices. Our laws lag far behind the science, making it difficult for health and environmental experts to take appropriate precautions. And our generation bears the burden of rising rates of childhood cancer, asthma, autism, infertility, learning disabilities and other health burdens linked to environmental factors.

Industry interests have too long locked chemical information away, preventing scrutiny that can protect our health and lead to innovation. We must start, here in Oregon, to open the vault and shed light on both the chemicals that pose health risks and the alternatives at hand. The Toxic Disclosure for Healthy Kids Act is a good start. It focuses on disclosing chemicals we know to be toxic as they appear in products made for the ages we know to be particularly vulnerable.

We support House Bill 3162, and urge Oregon's House Committee on Health Care to do the same. We must work together to build a new future in which we live, work and play in environments that support our health.

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