

**Testimony of Randy Tucker, Legislative Affairs Manager
In Support of House Bill 3162
House Committee on Health Care
March 20, 2013**



Chair Greenlick and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of House Bill 3162.

Metro is the regional government of the Portland metropolitan area, serving a population of 1.5 million people. Among our major responsibilities are managing the region's solid waste and providing services and educational resources to protect the environment, conserve resources and reduce the toxicity of the solid waste stream.

Metro strongly supports HB 3162. We agree with the bill's approach to designate a list of "high priority chemicals" that are of concern for children's health; require disclosure of those chemicals when they are present in children's products; and obligate manufacturers to institute plans to remove the priority chemicals from those products. This approach aligns with efforts by the Department of Environmental Quality, Metro and other stakeholders to focus on a list of priority chemicals as a key element in a comprehensive and systematic toxics reduction strategy for the state.

We believe that public disclosure of the toxic chemical constituents of a product and their potential impact is both a responsibility of industry and a first step that can lead product manufacturers to reformulate their products with non-toxic chemicals. Because children can be the most susceptible to the effects of toxic chemicals, the need for disclosure and reformulation is especially compelling with respect to children's products.

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 vulnerable infants and children to toxic chemicals. However, educational programs like Metro's and voluntary efforts by individual manufacturers, while helpful, are insufficient. Without more government action, children's products containing chemicals that include known carcinogens and endocrine disruptors will not be identifiable by Oregon consumers.

Metro also operates an extensive household hazardous waste program. While this program offers an important service to the community, we know that simply accommodating the need for the disposal of toxics is not enough; eliminating toxicity in the products that are bought and sold should be the priority.

HB 3162 includes reasonable timelines for compliance by manufacturers. It also authorizes the state to share information with other states, which we believe will improve its effectiveness. The state of Washington passed a similar bill (Children's Safe Product Act) in 2009.

Oregon's children should be protected from chemicals of concern in products that may harm them. We urge you to support HB 3162.