

House Committee on Energy and Environment
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Support Testimony for HB 2495 Revises provisions relating to chemicals in children's products

Committee Chair and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in favor of HB 2495 which revises provisions relating to chemicals in children's products.

My name is Michael Heumann and I live in NE Portland. I am a retired epidemiologist and worked at the Oregon Health Authority for 27 years (from 1984 – 2011) as the lead environmental and occupational epidemiologist for the State. During my tenure at OHA, my staff and I regularly responded to and investigated reports of contamination in children's products. Such incidents involved investigating reports of illnesses and toxic reactions to chemicals that contaminated children's toys, clothing, sports equipment and other products intended for use by children and infants. These chemicals were the result of intentionally adding an ingredient, accidental contamination, as well as part of the normal manufacturing of the product. We felt we were constantly playing catch-up, as there were inadequate or wholly missing requirements for manufacturers, importers, distributors to test and report on what chemical products are used in the manufacturing and distribution of children's products that could result in harm from children's exposure to the products, or that toxic chemicals leached out into our environment as a result of these products.

HB2495 is a strong step in strengthening the existing Toxic Free Kids Act of 2015, and making kids' products safer by requiring manufacturers and distributors to disclose the toxic ingredients in the products by brand name and model. Ideally, this will push responsible parties to be more transparent in exactly what toy has what chemical, and ultimately design and produce safer products free from these high priority chemicals

HB 2495 will help OHA gather more appropriate information on toxic chemicals that are associated with children's products, which will allow OHA to be more on top of possible exposures to contaminated products. This bill also gives OHA the discretion to regulate more or less chemicals, including classes of chemicals, to their discretion, based on the best available science.

I urge this committee to support and pass this useful legislation as a matter of furthering public health and environmental protections.

Thank you.

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