



February 28, 2023

Senator Sollman, Chair
Senate Committee on Energy & Environment
Oregon Legislature

Re: Environment Oregon and OSPIRG support Senate Bill 546

Chair Sollman, Vice-Chair Findley, and Members of the Committee,

Environment Oregon is a statewide, member-based environmental advocacy organization working for clean air, clean water, open space and a liveable climate. OSPIRG is a statewide, public interest group. We are writing in support of Senate Bill 546 to reduce exposure to toxic chemicals in cosmetics, including mercury, formaldehyde and PFAS.

Most people are surprised to learn that companies are allowed to use nearly any chemical they want as an ingredient in the personal care products they make. Just as alarming is the fact that the government doesn't test those chemicals for safety or require any pre-market approval.

When most of us shampoo our hair, wash our hands, protect our skin from the sun, lotion our babies, or get ready for a night on the town, we're unknowingly dousing our bodies with dozens of toxic chemicals that have been linked to serious health problems. The average woman uses [12 products containing 168 unique ingredients](#) every day. Men, on the other hand, use [6 products daily with 85 unique ingredients](#), on average. Personal care products are of particular concern because we put them directly on our skin. This means chemicals in these products can be absorbed or inhaled.

Like a lot of toxic chemical exposure, children are at increased risk due to the greater body burden and likelihood of ingestion.

Some toxic chemicals you can see right on the label, others are hidden and can only be found with testing. All of the chemicals listed in this bill have known harmful health effects. For example:

- Perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are used to make products waterproof, and are linked to a range of health effects, including breast and other cancers, immune suppression and hormone disruption, and these hazardous chemicals persist in the environment forever.
- Formaldehyde and formaldehyde releasing chemicals are used as a preservative and are linked to cancer, asthma and other respiratory illnesses.

The threat from these chemicals doesn't end at our bodies. When these products are washed down the drain, they can end up in the wastewater and eventually into our waterways. PFAS chemicals don't break down, so once they are in the environment, they are nearly impossible to remove, threatening wildlife and our drinking water.

Products we use on our bodies every day shouldn't contain toxic ingredients that put our health and environment at risk.

Senate Bill 546 will require the public disclosure of all chemical ingredients on a company's product webpage and ban the sale of the worst chemicals in cosmetics and personal care products. We urge you to pass Senate Bill 546 to protect the health and well being of Oregonians and our environment.

Sincerely,

Celeste Meiffren-Swango
State Director, Environment Oregon

Charlie Fisher
State Director, OSPIRG