



February 23, 2023

TO: Senate Committee on Energy and Environment  
FROM: Our Children Oregon, The Children's Agenda  
RE: Support for SB 546, Toxic Free Cosmetics

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

My name is Greer Klepacki, and I'm the Policy and Advocacy Coordinator for Our Children Oregon - a nonprofit dedicated to ensuring all children - regardless of their race, identity, ability, or where they live - have the resources and opportunities they need to thrive.

I'm here to also represent The Children's Agenda, convened by OCO, which brings together ~127 organizations statewide to create a holistic legislative agenda dedicated to improving the well-being of Oregon's children, youth, and families. Our collective created a 2023 legislative agenda that focuses on community-driven solutions to provide access and opportunities for all children and families. We support SB 546, which is a part of the 2023 Children's Agenda.

As of 2022, the cosmetics industry makes over \$49 billion annually, and the average American spends anywhere between \$200-300 monthly on these products. We also know there is a growing trend towards "clean beauty," or products that avoid animal testing, and contain natural components versus chemical components, as consumers are becoming more educated in what goes into their beloved beauty products.<sup>1</sup>

Sadly, we also know that many beauty products have not yet adopted this trend and still contain harmful chemicals like parabens, artificial fragrances, phthalates and sulfates.<sup>2</sup> In fact, several beauty products specifically aimed at women of color contain things like mercury and other dangerous chemicals that strip melanated skin of things like its natural moisture, texture, and even color.<sup>3</sup>

As someone who worked in the natural cosmetics industry for 5 years, I have seen many customers who were concerned about the health and safety of both themselves and their kids, and specifically came in looking for safe alternatives to these harmful chemicals. I can specifically recall a time that a customer came in looking for a lotion for their young baby that did not contain skin irritants like parabens and artificial fragrance, along with some of the harmful

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.zippia.com/advice/cosmetics-industry-statistics/#:~:text=Approximately%20%2449.2%20billion%20is%20generated.rate%20of%205.3%25%20each%20year>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/skin/index.html>

<sup>3</sup><https://goldengroomingco.com/blogs/news/the-absolute-worst-products-for-black-skin>

chemicals I mentioned earlier. They had mentioned that using these chemicals caused their baby to break out in a prolonged rash and worsened the already sensitive skin of their baby. In fact, this customer, along with several others, confided in me how much money and time they had spent trying to find a product that would work for their baby and would often cry saying how thankful they were to find a product that worked and was safe for their baby.

With consumer education on the rise, it is important to honor and protect the consumer by ensuring that all families, not just the ones who can afford high-end “clean” beauty products, have access to beauty products that are free from chemicals that are harmful. Moreover, we must focus our efforts to protect those who are most vulnerable to these chemicals, like low income families, families of color, and children, many of which these products are most targeted and sold to.

In closing, we strongly support SB 546 because it will ensure that the Oregon Health Authority regulates and maintains a list of chemicals of concern used in cosmetic products. It will also make sure that the Oregon Health Authority periodically reviews and revises the list to ensure it is the most up to date and protects both consumers in the present and the future.

We thank you for your time and efforts to improve child well-being across the state, and we urge you to support SB 546.

From the Our Children Oregon Team,

Greer Klepacki, Policy and Advocacy Coordinator

Jenifer Wagley, Executive Director

*View the 2023 Children's Agenda at [www.ourchildrenoregon.org/2023-childrens-agenda](http://www.ourchildrenoregon.org/2023-childrens-agenda)*