



March 4, 2023
Senator Sollman, Chair
Senate Committee on Energy & Environment
Oregon Legislature

RE: HB 3043 Support

Chair Sollman, Vice-Chair Findley and members of the committee-

My name is Celeste Meiffren-Swango and I am the state director with Environment Oregon, a statewide, member-based environmental advocacy organization, representing tens of thousands of members across the state, working for clean air, clean water, open space and a liveable climate.

I am here today to testify in support of House Bill 3043, the Toxic-Free Kids Modernization bill. The -A3 amendment is the product of a collaborative process between legislators, some manufacturers and environmental advocates– and though we preferred the bill as it was originally written, we believe that with the -A3 amendment, the core benefits of the bill remain intact, so we support the adoption of this amendment if it's what's needed to move the bill forward.

There are more than 80,000 chemicals on the market in the United States, and most of them are put directly into use without testing the long-term consequences for the environment, or their impact on human and animal health.

As a mom of two little girls (both avid lovers of Malibu Barbie), I am concerned about my kids' exposure to these chemicals in consumer products and the potential long-term impact that exposure would have on their health.

But not only do toxic chemicals in children's products harm human health, but they can also be harmful to the environment. *My second grader has been reading a children's book called, "Spring after spring," which is about Rachel Carson who wrote "Silent Spring" in 1962. Carson exposed the impact of toxic chemicals– particularly pesticides– on the environment, and taught us all to be more careful about the chemicals we are using and how we treat nature.*

And while we've come a long way since the 1960s, we still have more work to do. The toxic chemicals that we use in consumer products –Heavy metals in toys and paint kits, Bisphenols in plastics, and PFAS Forever chemicals in clothing and many others– eventually end up in landfills and our natural environment, especially our waterways, where they can impact wildlife or whole ecosystems, and in some cases, persist for decades.

We have always supported the requirement for manufacturers to disclose and phase out toxic ingredients in consumer products. Giving the Oregon Health Authority the ability to regulate (but not mandate) chemicals by class and removing the limit on chemicals they can regulate would further the goal of limiting the amount of toxic chemicals that children are exposed to, and in turn, limit the toxic chemicals that make their way into the environment. Because, as Rachel Carson said, "in nature, nothing exists alone."

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

Sincerely,
Celeste Meiffren-Swango
State Director