

SUPPORT

LD 1181 - An Act to Further Strengthen the Protection of Pregnant Women and Children from Toxic Chemicals

Sponsor: Senator GOODALL of Kennebec.

Co-Sponsors: Speaker EVES of North Berwick, and Senators: President ALFOND of Cumberland, Gratwick of Penobscot, Representatives: DORNEY of Norridgewock, GIDEON of Freeport, GRAHAM of North Yarmouth, GRANT of Gardiner, PRINGLE of Windham, SANBORN of Gorham.

Summary: The bill will help Maine people know which consumer products contain the worst chemicals present in consumer goods; create an action plan for the state to protect citizens from the toxins of highest concern; and close a loophole that blocks regulation of chemicals in food packaging for young children, pregnant mothers, and others.

Explanation: No child should be exposed to dangerous chemicals in their food, toys, or homes. More action is needed to protect Maine people, especially pregnant women and children, from the most harmful chemicals that are still found in consumer products. Last year, Maine took the important step of identifying 49 “Chemicals of High Concern” that can be found in consumer products. Scientific evidence shows that these chemicals can cause cancer, reproductive problems, and hormone disruption. But no action will be taken to protect Maine people from these 49 worst-of-the-worst chemicals unless the Legislature provides direction.

LD 1181 will address this problem by requiring the DEP to collect information about what products sold in Maine contain Chemicals of High Concern, and to identify two priority chemicals each year for further analysis, and, if called for, restrictions. The bill also phases out a loophole that exempts most food packaging from Maine’s Kid-safe Products Act. The original Kid-safe Products Act contains an exemption that blocks regulation of BPA and other chemicals in food packaging, unless the food is intentionally marketed to children under age three. This bill would repeal that arbitrary exemption, and give Maine the authority to consider phasing out use of BPA in all food packaging.

Maine people shouldn’t have to worry about whether consumer products are safe. All the existing requirements of Maine’s Kid-safe Products Act have been completed. Unless the Legislature acts, we won’t learn more about the safety of the products on our shelves today. The Maine DEP should be required to identify which products contain the “worst of the worst” chemicals and set priorities for action to get those chemicals out of household products that Maine children encounter every day. Because only two chemicals have been prioritized for action since 2008, this bill ensures we keep making progress toward safer products by identifying alternatives to the most harmful chemicals and phasing out unnecessary uses of priority chemicals when there are safer, affordable alternatives available.

NRCM supports LD 1181.