



Legislation Text

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Clerk 02/23/2012

A MOTION expressing support for measures that amend the Children's Safe Products Act by banning certain toxic flame retardants in products designed for children, and requiring assessment of alternatives to other chemicals of concern, being considered by the Washington state Legislature.

WHEREAS, parents and caregivers of young children acknowledge the special responsibility they have for assuring children's physical wellbeing, including the duty to protect them from exposure to harmful products and toxic substances, and

WHEREAS, in carrying out such responsibility, parents and caregivers place trust in product manufacturers for consideration of safety and health concerns in the production of consumer products widely available through major retail outlets, particularly those intended for use in service to children, and

WHEREAS, a recent assessment of children's products purchased from major retailers, such as car seats, bassinette pads, changing pads and nursing pillows, has found that, of the twenty items tested, seventeen showed evidence of the presence of toxic flame retardants, and

WHEREAS, the most frequently detected chemical among these flame retardants is a chemical known as "chlorinated TRIS," which has been declared a carcinogen by the state of California, and was removed from children's pajamas several decades ago after laboratory studies found it could cause mutations, and

WHEREAS, this assessment was reported on by the Washington Toxics Coalition and Safe States in a report entitled Hidden Hazards in the Nursery, January 2012, and

WHEREAS, the report indicated further that these toxic flame retardants are used to treat polyurethane

foam that was present in all of the products tested, and that the toxic flame retardants are not chemically bound to the foam, and therefore can escape into the home environment and settle on surfaces, and

WHEREAS the report described young children's heightened vulnerability to the effects of household toxics exposure, because their biological systems are still in early development, and because they spend more time near floors where household dust can gather and be ingested through the frequent hand-to-mouth contact that is characteristic of young children, and

WHEREAS, the report notes that some manufacturers currently employ alternatives to the use of toxic fire retardants for children's products, demonstrating that there are viable nontoxic options available, and

WHEREAS, the report also describes the potential of toxic chemicals from consumer products to make their way into the region's natural environment and accumulate in waterways and in the tissue of local species of fish and wildlife, and

WHEREAS, state governments are at the forefront of efforts to protect children from the effects of such toxics by requiring manufacturers to limit or eliminate their use in children's products, including a ban by the state of New York of a TRIS flame retardant called TCEP, and consideration by several state legislatures of measures to ban toxic flame retardants in children's products, and

WHEREAS the Washington state Legislature is considering measures in its 2012 legislative session, Senate Bill 6120 and House Bill 2266, each amending the Children's Safe Products Act, which would: prohibit the manufacture, sale or distribution of children's products containing TRIS; require manufacturers of children's products containing specified toxic chemicals to identify alternatives; and authorize the Washington state Department of Ecology to require manufactures of children's products containing chemicals of high concern to conduct alternatives assessments of two such chemicals per year, and

WHEREAS, the legislation that was introduced this legislative session has been amended in a way that substantially weakens the intent of the original, and

WHEREAS, parents in King County, and residents of the region generally, have great interest in the

legislature's action on the amendment to the Children's Safe Products Act as a tool to ensure the safety of products for children,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

The council strongly supports passage of the original version of either House Bill 2266 or Senate Bill 6120 introduced in the 2012 regular session of Washington state legislature. These measures call for reasonable amendments to the Children's Safe Products Act.