



Protect Children, Families and Firefighters from Toxic Flame Retardants

Massachusetts should Pass the Children and Firefighters Protection Act

*S. 2349/H.4900– Sponsored by Senator
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The Children and Firefighters Protection Act bans 11 toxic flame retardants from being added to

- residential upholstered furniture
- mattresses and bedding
- children's products
- carpeting
- window treatments.

It also gives the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection the authority to restrict additional flame retardant chemicals if they are known or reasonably anticipated to cause cancer, genetic damage, reproductive harm, endocrine disruption, or damage to people's organs, immune system or nervous systems, or are known to be persistent, bio-accumulative and toxic.

What's wrong with flame retardant chemicals?

Toxic flame retardants are added to highchairs, car seats, nursing pads, furniture, carpet pads, electronic equipment (including toys), and many more common household products. These chemicals have been linked to cancer, neuro-toxicity, developmental toxicity, and endocrine disruption. They do not stay in the products; they get out into the dust in our homes and the air that we breathe, and ultimately into our bodies.

Children's developing bodies are much more vulnerable to the health risks associated with flame retardants than adults. Their tendency to touch their faces and mouths add to the danger and put them at even greater risk. Firefighters are exposed to flame retardants when they go into burning buildings. When the chemicals burn, they create toxic smoke and soot, contributing to the high rate of cancer among firefighters.

Don't we need flame retardants for fire safety?

For decades, chemical flame retardants have been used in ways that are ineffective at slowing the spread of fire. Fortunately, there are ways to make products more fire safe and less toxic, like using less flammable materials and safer chemicals. Many companies are already doing so, and flame retardant free products are widely available. That's why firefighters in Massachusetts and across the country are calling for bans on toxic flame retardants. The Professional Firefighters of Massachusetts and Fire Chiefs Association of Massachusetts support these bills banning toxic flame retardants.

There is widespread support for banning toxic flame retardants in Massachusetts

The Massachusetts Legislature enacted a flame retardant ban on January 1, 2019. Governor Baker did not sign the bill into law but sent a memo saying he would have worked with the Legislature rather than veto if a bill was sent to him earlier in the session. The flame retardant bills have been considered over the course of 3 Legislative sessions.

Now it is December 2020. Both the House and Senate have passed the flame retardant ban once again! The bill should be sent to the Governor this month. We need to let the Governor know he should sign the flame retardant ban and not weaken it. If he does veto or weaken, we need to let our legislators know, right away, that they should over-ride

Who else is acting to restrict flame retardants?

Thirteen states have laws restricting the use of chemical flame retardants. Maine bans all chemical flame retardants from residential upholstered furniture. California bans most chemical flame retardants from residential upholstered furniture, mattress foam, and children's products.

In 2017, the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) issued an advisory, recommending that pregnant women and parents of young children avoid organohalogen flame retardants, manufacturers stop using them, and retailers stop selling products that contain them. Nine of the 11 flame retardants banned in the Massachusetts bills are organohalogens.

Unfortunately, there is no practical way for parents to follow the CPSC advice. With the exception of residential upholstered furniture, products don't have labels indicating whether or not they contain flame retardants.

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