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CT LAWMAKERS AND ADVOCATES POINT TO LANDMARK BPA BAN AS “A GOOD STARTING POINT TO BROADER REFORM”

HARTFORD – Two years ago, Connecticut became the first state in the nation to ban the toxic chemical bisphenol-A (BPA) from infant formula and baby food cans and jars, as well as a wide range of reusable food and beverage containers. Calling Connecticut a leader in the nation, state lawmakers and advocates today praised the state’s new law that takes effect tomorrow, October 1st.

State Senator Beth Bye (D-West Hartford), who championed the bill in 2009 along with many of her legislative colleagues including **state Senator Ed Meyer (D-Guilford)**, **state Representative Lonnie Reed (D-Branford)** and **state Representative Richard Roy (D-Milford)** held a press conference at the Legislative Office Building today to celebrate the new law and discuss the importance of continuing the dialogue of comprehensive chemical policy reform.

Senator Bye, one of the initiative’s strongest advocates in the General Assembly in 2009, said, “Consumers have been demanding BPA-free baby products, and now manufacturers -- in responding to Connecticut’s new regulations -- are poised to provide BPA-free containers nationwide. We have the strongest BPA ban in the country and all businesses have complied. This new law shows that one state can have a huge effect on public health.”

State Senator Edward Meyer (D-Guilford), Senate Chair of the Legislature’s Environment Committee agreed with his senate colleague and added, “Connecticut residents will be safer because this toxic chemical has been banned.”

Eight states including Connecticut have passed laws banning BPA in baby bottles and sippy cups. These states are Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New York, Vermont, Washington and Wisconsin. California’s legislature also just passed a ban that is awaiting Governor Brown’s signature. Connecticut’s law was the first to also ban BPA in infant formula containers. Vermont is the second and only other state with such a broad ban.

Senator Meyer’s Environment Co-Chair, **state Representative Richard Roy (D-Milford)** said, “I want to specifically thank Sarah Uhl and Anne Hulick for leading the effort to pass this ban,” said State Representative Richard Roy (D-Milford), House Chairman of the Environment Committee. “This ban on BPA is another major step for our country in removing toxic chemicals from our environment. I

appreciate the steps being taken by the chemical companies to comply with these laws, but more needs to be done."

"I am proud to be among the Connecticut legislators who voted to lead the nation by banning BPA from baby bottles and other children's food containers. We did it in a rational and responsible way, giving companies time to find safe substitutes," said **State Representative Lonnie Reed (D-Branford)** "This law serves as a model for the country and sends the powerful message that we must keep fighting to protect not just our children, but all consumers from toxic products that are harmful to health and development."

Joining the lawmakers at the event was **Coalition for a Safe and Healthy Connecticut (CSHC)** – a driving force behind efforts on the state and federal level to eliminate dangerous chemicals from everyday products. **CSHC Coordinator Anne Hulick, RN, MS, JD** said that a growing number of its members are concerned parents, particularly mothers, who want to protect their children from the many illnesses, such as cancers, reproductive disorders and learning and behavioral disorders that are linked to dangerous chemicals – like BPA.

She added, "I wish I could say that as of tomorrow Connecticut's youngest and most vulnerable citizens are safe from the harmful effects of dangerous chemicals, but I can't. We need to continue to stay the course of eliminating toxic chemicals from the products we use everyday – with thousands of chemicals in commerce and only a fraction of them tested for safety – it's more important than ever that we work together on comprehensive reform."

Hacah Boros, a mother and a nurse, said that toxic chemical reform, such as this ban on BPA, is so important to the future of our children's health. She added that it is a comfort to know that her government has taken a step to ensure the safety and well being of her child, "As a mother, time is limited and life is very busy. Even for someone like myself, educated in health and science, it is very difficult to know what products are safe to use--even when you know what to look for. To read through the ingredients of products to pick out the unsafe chemical (among a long list) is exhausting and very few parents have the time to do so. I have talked to many parents who are frustrated and overwhelmed, and feel like they are unsure how to protect their children from these hidden toxins. Toxic chemical reform is long overdue. I am so proud of CT for being at the leading edge of this reform!"

"Toxic chemical reform is important to me and my family, because we should be able to trust the products on the shelves in our stores," said **H. Shiyrah Suplita**, a concerned mom who attended the press conference. "We use the most toxic chemicals on the smallest, most vulnerable humans and it really needs to stop. I shouldn't have to worry if the shampoo I am buying now is going to affect my son's health. He will have enough to worry about with all of the chemicals that already exist in his body and in the environment. Let's stop adding to that and protect our kids!"

The Coalition for a Safe and Healthy Connecticut is a growing partnership of citizens and over 50 organizations working for safer alternatives to toxic chemicals. The Coalition represents health professionals, workers, nurses, businesses, environmentalists, occupational safety advocates, people of faith, and individuals whose health has been impacted by toxic chemicals.

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