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# News Release

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## **Children's Committee Approves Cadmium Restrictions** *A Positive Step, but Broader Policies Needed to Protect Children's Health*

Hartford— The Coalition for a Safe & Healthy Connecticut applauds members of the Legislature's Select Committee on Children for approving House Bill 5314, An Act Banning Cadmium in Children's Jewelry. The bill passed the committee 10-2. State Representatives Karen Jarmoc (D, Enfield) and Michael Alberts (R, Woodstock) voted against the bill. Now the measure moves to the Environment Committee, which is considering a separate measure that would enable state agencies to restrict toxic chemicals in children's products in an effort to move beyond the heated, one-chemical-at-a-time battles that have marked recent legislative sessions.

"The Connecticut Public Health Association strongly supports efforts to limit cadmium in children's products to prevent any possible health effects and related diseases later in life," said **Annamarie Beaulieu, MPH, campaign director for the Connecticut Public Health Association**. "The evidence linking cadmium to certain cancers and reproductive disorders is very compelling."

Connecticut is not alone in considering action on this toxic metal. Legislators in California, Florida, Minnesota, Mississippi, New Jersey, and New York have introduced bills, and the State of Washington enacted a law in 2008 that bans more than 0.004% cadmium in products for children.

Meanwhile, in an effort to protect the status quo, lobbyists for the toy and jewelry trade associations have descended on the state capitol in an effort to stall and weaken this and related bills before the legislature. During a public hearing before the Environment Committee on March 1<sup>st</sup>, the Fashion Jewelry Trade Association stated that cadmium in children's jewelry is not a health concern, even if swallowed.

"It's shocking that lobbyists for the toy industry are trying to kill this bill and even claim that cadmium is safe," said **Phil Sherwood, deputy director of the CT Citizen Action Group**. "They've shown no concern that they are knowingly exposing children to carcinogens. And somehow, with a straight face, they deny that a child might swallow a cadmium-laced pendant and poison themselves."

As strongly as health advocates support the proposed restrictions on cadmium, the bigger push this year involves House Bill 5130, which would finally give state agencies the authority to regulate toxins in consumer products. While the details of the bill are still being negotiated, advocates believe that the legislation would result in safer children's products, and speed the process of identifying and phasing out the most dangerous substances, such as cadmium. The legislature has recently supported high-profile restrictions on toxic chemicals such as Bisphenol-A and lead, but this is only the very beginning of the list of toxic substances about which health experts have already sounded the alarm. The broad reform policies are consistent with recent laws passed by Maine, Minnesota, and Washington State that provide more regulatory certainty for chemical companies and stimulate green chemistry innovation.

“As thrilled as we are about the Bisphenol-A restrictions, that legislation still represents a political compromise that only partially solves the problem of that one chemical,” said **Sarah Uhl, environmental health coordinator for Clean Water Action**. “We need another tool for addressing chemicals in consumer products. This is too big a problem to solve at the legislature one chemical at a time.”

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