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COALITION FOR A SAFE AND HEALTHY CONNECTICUT ANNOUNCES 2011 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

**Includes banning thermal register receipts containing BPA, and
a comprehensive proposal to phase out toxic chemicals in children's products**

(Hartford) -- **The Coalition for a Safe and Healthy Connecticut (CSHC)** today held a press conference at the Legislative Office Building surrounded by lawmakers and health advocates to announce its legislative priorities for 2011. The Coalition is calling for comprehensive chemical policy reform to phase out toxic chemicals in children's products and a ban of cash register and ATM receipts that contain Bisphenol-A (BPA). Connecticut is one of 30 states nationwide today announcing legislative proposals to address chemical toxic reform.

Also being proposed will be a bill to improve the rate of recycling of mercury thermostats. Currently nationwide, only 5% of the mercury thermostats removed from homes are turned in for safe recycling. The Connecticut legislation would be modeled on successful programs being implemented in Maine and Vermont.

"We are here because there is so much more work that needs to be done to protect Connecticut's citizens and particularly, children," said **CSHC Coordinator and registered nurse, Anne Hulick**. "Continued public concern over the presence of dangerous chemicals in children's and consumer products coupled with Congressional inaction on the matter means that individual states need to address these issues."

Hulick added, "Despite well-funded opposition from the chemical industry, 18 state legislatures - including Connecticut - have already passed 71 chemical safety laws in the last eight years by an overwhelming, bipartisan margin. Connecticut's lawmakers are recognized locally and nationally as leaders for passing health protective state reforms and we hope to continue this charge in 2011. In doing so, we continue to show Congress that this is an issue that needs to be addressed."

Joining the Coalition at the press conference were **state Senators Edward Meyer (D-Branford)** and **Beth Bye (D-West Hartford)**, and **state Representatives Richard Roy (D-Milford)**, **Lonnie Reed (D-Branford)** and **Diana Urban (D-North Stonington)** who have all been strong advocates for chemical policy reform at the Legislature.

"We've been successful in the past in banning BPA from baby bottles and water bottles, but we must remain vigilant when it comes to the health of our citizens," said **Senator Meyer, Chairman of the Environment Committee**. "But noxious chemicals continue to enter our lives in a variety of insidious ways, and that is why I

have introduced legislation to strengthen the Child Safe Products Act and ban the use of bisphenol-A in thermal receipt paper."

"The evidence is mounting - BPA poses a significant risk to public health. We need to continue to work to reduce the public's exposure to this toxin," added **Senator Bye**.

Also speaking in support of the Legislature adopting protective health policies was **Beka Apostolidis, R.N, M.S. and breast cancer survivor**. "There is a significant amount of peer-reviewed research that links exposure to toxic chemicals with cancers, diabetes, learning disabilities and reproductive disorders. As a nurse, educator and cancer survivor, I believe we must take precautionary measures and reduce exposure to toxic chemicals- particularly for children," said **Apostolidis**.

"The President's Cancer Panel Report, published in May 2010, confirmed that exposure to toxic chemicals is a serious risk factor for cancer and has been grossly underestimated," said **Lisa Cull, RN, M.S.N. and immediate past president of the Central CT Oncology Nurses Society**. "We have made significant improvements in cancer treatment but we need to focus on prevention as well. Reducing our exposure to toxic chemicals, particularly for children, is vitally important. The Central CT Oncology Nurses Society supports CT's work and applauds our lawmakers for their leadership in this regard."

"Having advocated for the removal of toxic chemicals from our environment for the past several years, I support the Coalition for a Safe and Healthy Connecticut's goal of removing harmful BPA's," said **House Environment Chair Richard Roy**. "Anything to protect our children."

"Connecticut is proud to have established ourselves as a leader in addressing this worldwide problem of toxic chemicals and the damage they pose to human health," said **Representative Reed, House Vice Chair of the Energy & Technology Committee**. "Our objective is to continue crafting responsible public policy that protects consumers, especially children, and also urges and helps businesses to find safe substitutes for dangerous ingredients. The bottom line is unsafe products hurt the people who use them and eventually the businesses that produce or sell them."

According to **Hulick**, increasing rates of chronic diseases linked to toxic chemical exposure, including cancer, asthma, and infertility, have created an urgency in state capitols to enact policies to phase out toxic chemicals from children's and other consumer products.

Last November two national health-based coalitions, [SAFER States](#) and [Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families](#), released a report called *Healthy States: Protecting Families from Toxic Chemicals While Congress Lags Behind* (<http://blog.saferchemicals.org/2010/11/healthy-states-protecting-families-from-toxic-chemicals-while-congress-lags-behind.html>). This first-ever analysis of votes on state laws aimed at protecting the public from toxic chemicals found that, of more than 9,000 votes cast by state legislators, 73% of Republicans and 99% of Democrats favored stronger protection of children's health and the environment from dangerous chemicals, with equal support from governors of each party. The report found that the pace of state policymaking on chemicals has more than tripled in eight years.

Bills to be considered in the 30 states include: bans on BPA and hazardous flame retardants in consumer products; requirements that children's product manufacturers use only the safest chemicals; and resolutions urging Congress to overhaul the 1976 Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) – the federal law that allows dangerous and untested chemicals to be used in everyday products and materials.