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At Least Twenty Eight States to Propose Toxics Policies in 2015

PORTLAND, Ore. (February 9, 2015) —Safer States anticipates at least 28 states will propose policies in the next year to reduce exposures to untested and toxic chemicals in consumer products. These bills build on a decade of laws passed in 35 states to protect public health and the environment.

2015 bills take aim at toxic chemicals with established links to cancer, reproductive harm or developmental harm in children's products, furniture and other consumer products. Chemicals under scrutiny include flame retardants, components of plastics, and preservatives like formaldehyde found in cosmetics and consumer products. States are also moving to empower consumers with information about chemicals in products and to require manufacturers to provide public information.

Though chemicals in consumer products have substantially changed in the last several decades, the 1976 Toxic Substances Control Act has never been updated. The Act was largely declared a failure by the U.S. government in 2005, but congress has yet to take any meaningful action to update and improve the law. In this time, chemical regulation has become the province of the states.

"States bear a great social and economic burden from chronic disease. If we can reduce that burden by eliminating chemical hazards that undermine health, it's the right thing to do. Chemical policy is integral to 21st century preventative health policy," said Representative Alissa Keny-Guyer (D-Portland, OR).

State regulations have catalyzed change far beyond their individual borders. Both regulatory and voluntary national phase-outs and restrictions on flame retardants and phthalates have their roots in state policy. When Washington State began requiring manufacturers to disclose their use of toxic chemicals, major manufacturers like Wal-Mart and Johnson & Johnson soon followed with commitments to voluntary phase-outs.

While there are reports indicating a federal TSCA reform bill may move in Congress this year, states are not abandoning their responsibility to ensure proper protections.

"We urgently need to fix our nation's broken chemical regulatory system, but states must always play a role. States are more nimble and can respond to emerging threats much faster than the federal government. Public health is best protected with both states and the federal government working to eliminate threats posed by hazardous chemicals." Sarah Doll, National Director, Safer States.

For updates on state legislation, please see SAFER's bill tracker on www.saferstates.org.

Highlights of 2015 state policy

Identification and Disclosure of Chemicals Harmful to Children. At least twelve states will consider policy to: identify chemicals of concern; and/or require makers of consumer products to disclose chemicals of concern; and/or phase out chemicals of concern. California, **Connecticut**, Delaware, Florida,

Toxic Flame Retardants: At least eleven states and the District of Columbia will consider policy to phase out the use of and/or require labeling of toxic flame retardants in certain consumer products. Alaska, California, **Connecticut**, Idaho, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Tennessee and Washington.

Phthalates: At least five states will consider policy to keep phthalates out of jewelry, childcare products, cosmetics and other consumer products. Maine, Michigan, Mississippi, New Jersey, and New York.

Lead: At least five states will consider policy to address lead in paint, kids' products, electronics and other products. Illinois, Indiana, Mississippi, New Jersey and New York.

Bisphenol A: At least six states will consider addressing the endocrine disruptor BPA in kids' products, food packaging and other products. **Connecticut**, Delaware, Massachusetts, Maryland, New Jersey, and New York

Cadmium: At least four states will consider restricting cadmium in jewelry and kids' products. Illinois, Mississippi, New Jersey and New York.

Additional approaches: Less-toxic cleaning supplies in schools (Arizona, Massachusetts, New Jersey); restrictions on mercury (Arkansas, California, Illinois, New Jersey and New York); restrictions on triclosan (Iowa); restrictions on synthetic turf (California, New York); green procurement strategies (**Connecticut**, New Jersey, Vermont); restrictions on formaldehyde in children's personal care products (New York, South Carolina); restrictions on microbeads (**Connecticut**, Vermont and Wyoming); and policies yet to be determined (North Carolina, Rhode Island).

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About Safer States:

Safer States is a network of diverse environmental health coalitions and organizations in states around the country that share a bold and urgent vision. We believe families, communities, and the environment should be protected from the devastating impacts of our society's heavy use of chemicals. We believe that new state and national chemical policies will contribute to the formation of a cleaner, greener economy. www.saferstates.org