

Feds reject BPA ban, CT legislation still proposed

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In a long awaited decision, the federal government announced Friday that it will not ban bisphenol A, an industrial chemical believed to disrupt the reproductive and nervous systems, from food and drink packaging. The decision puts further onus on Connecticut to pioneer anti-BPA legislation, state Rep. Dick Roy said.

Roy is one of the supporters of a proposed state law that would require any food or drink packaging that contains BPA to clearly say so on its label.

"If the EPA or the FDA took action, we wouldn't have to, but they don't and -- and despite many requests from around the country they sit on their hands," Roy said in earlier testimony. "Unfortunately, there's an open door policy between industry and some of these departments down there, where workers come and go from one to the other and back, and I think what we've got to do is -- is if enough states do something, then the federal government will do something for the whole country."

In the war against Bisphenol A, Connecticut has been a leader. The state was one of the first states to ban the chemical from baby bottles and other children's products. Last year, it became the first state to ban BPA from cash register tape.

Bisphenol A is found in many hard plastic bottles and metal-based food and beverage cans. The Food & Drug Administration's official stance is that toxicity tests show low levels of exposure to BPA is safe, but it does acknowledge other studies show there could be some concern about BPA's effect on the brain, behavior, prostate gland in fetuses, infants and young children. The FDA is carrying out in-depth studies, but until results are available, it does support efforts to replace or minimize BPA in food can linings.

The National Resources Defence Council filed a petition with the FDA 2008 asking it to ban BPA from all food containers. Although the FDA was legally required to respond to the petition within 180 days, two years passed with no response. The NRDC filed a lawsuit against the FDA in August to force a response and a federal judge ruled the FDA had until the end of March to decide whether to ban the chemical.

But how well Connecticut is enforcing the legislation is not known, and begs the question whether it should add more laws, state Rep. Craig Miner said in an Environment Committee hearing.

The cash register tape ban does not officially go into effect until Oct. 1, 2013 and that's only if the Environmental Protection Agency identifies a safe alternative. Otherwise, it does not take effect until July, 2015. The state Department of Consumer Protection is responsible for enforcing the existing BPA ban on infant products.

The department's spokesman Claudette Carveth said she did not believe Consumer Protection has taken any action regarding reusable containers and infant formula.

"My concern is that we keep taking these steps and I think the perception of folks when they leave here is that they've done something wonderful, but if we don't actually take the steps to make sure that we've done what they think we've done, have we done anything wonderful?" Miner said.

Even if the state does migrate from BPA to other substances, how does it have any guarantee they are any more healthy, Miner asked.

Read more: <http://www.newstimes.com/local/article/Feds-reject-BPA-ban-CT-legislation-still-proposed-3451392.php#ixzz1sOQFrtyi>