



## MAINE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

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### TESTIMONY OF THE MAINE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION IN SUPPORT OF

**L.D. 1796, Resolve, Regarding Legislative Review of Chapter 881: Fees, Chemical Use in Children's Products**

**A Major Substantive Rule of the Department of Environmental Protection before the Joint Standing Committee on Natural Resources**

Joint Standing Committee on Natural Resources

Room 214 , Cross State Office Building

1:00 pm, Tuesday, March 9, 2010

Good afternoon Senator Goodall, Representative Duchesne and Members of the Natural Resources Committee. I am Kellie Miller, Director of Public Health Policy at the Maine Medical Association and I am speaking in support of *L.D. 1796, Resolve, Regarding Legislative Review of Chapter 881: Fees, Chemical Use in Children's Products*, to fully implement the Kid Safe Products Act of 2008. The MMA is a professional organization representing more than 3,000 physicians, residents, and medical students whose mission is "to support Maine physicians, advance the quality of medicine in Maine, and promote the health of all Maine citizens."

We stand at a threshold of opportunity now. Reducing the exposure of the next generation to dangerous chemicals, using a scientific approach, could be as significant a public health revolution as recognition of the need for clean water. The process taken did not seek categorical bans or action without forethought. Instead Proposed Chapter 881 is an overly cautious approach for phasing out the very most dangerous "priority" chemicals requiring manufacturers to disclose the use of priority chemicals in children's products and authorizes the state to require safer alternatives. It is critically important that we proceed with implementation of this rule because our youngest children are at the greatest risk from harmful chemicals in everyday products.

For example:

- More than 75% of brain development occurs during the first three years of a child's life.
- Children are especially vulnerable to toxic chemicals as their bodies are developing rapidly, they ingest household dust, and they put products in their mouths.



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- Credible scientific research has linked low-level chemical exposure to learning disabilities, reproductive harm, hormone problems and cancer. Attached to this testimony is the position statement of the Endocrine Society on Endocrine-Disrupting Chemicals, June 2009. Studies are showing that with some toxins, less is worse. It's only the smaller amount of some endocrine disruptors that adversely affects the genetic material of organisms. Because it is the DNA of organisms, it can be passed onto subsequent generations.

Many Maine physicians feel an obligation to speak out to protect public health and they very strongly support the Board of Environmental Protections efforts to prevent human exposure to toxic chemicals. We agree that the Maine Department of Environmental Protection needs to have the finances and ability to investigate and review those manufacturers of products sold in Maine that contain these "priority" chemicals.

Thank you for considering the views of the Maine Medical Association on this important matter of public health. I would be happy to answer any questions.