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Testimony of Lani Graham, MD, MPH
Co-Chair of the Public Health Committee of the
Maine Medical Association

IN SUPPORT OF

LD 667: RESOLVE, DIRECTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES TO
EDUCATE THE PUBLIC AND DEPARTMENT CLIENTS ABOUT HOW TO PROTECT ONE'S
FAMILY FROM BISPHENOL A

Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services
Room 209, Cross State Office Building
Friday, March 27, 2015

Good afternoon Senator Brakey, Representative Gattine and Members of the Health and Human Services Committee. My name is Lani Graham. I am a Family Practice physician and former Chief Public Health officer for Maine. I am the current Co-Chair of the Public Health Committee for the Maine Medical Association (MMA). I have asked Peter Michaud to present this testimony on behalf of Dr. Oppenheim, my Co-Chair and myself. Dr. Oppenheim is an endocrinologist and has been particularly interested in this issue, but neither of us could be here today.

Our public health committee has been concerned about the issue of toxic chemicals in the environment for at least a decade. I myself have testified both in the Legislature and in front of the Board of Environmental Protection (BEP) with the goal of protecting Maine people, especially women and children from the adverse effects of Bisphenol A (BPA). Throughout this period the chemical industry, like the tobacco industry before it, has done everything possible to block common sense efforts to reduce exposure.

Despite the efforts of the chemical industry, the BEP and the Maine Legislature have both taken stands on this chemical. The BEP has already required BPA-free infant formula and baby food packaging, as well as baby bottles, sippy cups, and other reusable food and beverage containers. The Maine Legislature affirmed the Board's rule-making on BPA in food packaging and reusable containers almost unanimously. Now is the time to act again.

BPA has been implicated as a hormone disrupting chemical at low doses. It interferes with normal hormonal balance, especially in developing fetuses and infants, who are so vulnerable to the effects of both natural and synthetic hormones. Over 150 peer-reviewed studies have been published showing

BPA's dangerous health effects. BPA can harm the developing fetus and cause breast and prostate cancer, diabetes, learning disabilities, behavior problems, and reproductive damage. The effects of BPA are pervasive and include affecting the receptors involved in metabolism, obesity and brain signaling.

The MMA and the Maine Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics have both passed resolutions calling for the replacement of BPA with safer alternatives. BPA is widely used to line metal food cans and jar lids. It is an unstable chemical and readily leaches out of plastics and epoxy resins to contaminate food and beverages.

Research shows that adult BPA exposure could be reduced by two thirds if food packaging were BPA-free. In addition, children's exposure to BPA is dominated by consumption of adult canned food.

The Department of Health and Human Services is already on the right path by providing resources on BPA to recipients on the WIC program. LD 667 as amended offers the opportunity to provide other vulnerable Mainers get accurate information about the dangers posed by BPA. Helping Maine get the most current information to allow them to make informed choices about their health and that of their children is a cornerstone of public health. We believe in preventing health problems rather than treating them after damage has been done. Prevention is what LD 667 is all about. We urge your support and thank you for your attention.