

Environmental

Advocates

NY

EANY SUPPORTS

Ending Toxics in Products



Memo #44

[A.5418-B \(Englebright, et al.\)](#)

[S.4630-B \(Kaminsky, et al.\)](#)

Explanation:

In recent years, the shiny veneer has been peeled off the flame-retardant industry, exposing the myths around their claims of fire safety. According to the National Bureau of Standards of the U.S. Department of Commerce, there is no significant difference in fire resistance between treated and untreated foams used in furniture. Chemical flame retardants not only do very little to prevent fires in residential furniture like sofas and mattresses, but also off-gas fumes into our homes. What is more, during a fire the flame retardants actually burn and release highly toxic smoke putting fire fighters at considerably more at risk of numerous types of cancer.

In addition, flame retardants are regularly added to other household products, such as electronic cases and enclosures. These chemical residues migrate out of the products in our homes and accumulate in indoor dust, which is ingested into people's bodies, in particular young children who spend more time close to the floor and have hand-to-mouth behaviors.

A wealth of scientific literature links flame retardants themselves to cancer, endocrine disruption, reproductive problems, and reduced IQ. Young children are particularly at risk of impacts from these chemicals. According to the award-winning Chicago Tribune series from 2012, "a typical American baby is born with the highest recorded concentrations of flame retardants among infants in the world." These chemicals have been shown to disrupt hormones, cause neurological impairment, reduce fertility, and cause cancer. A 2017 Oregon State University study found a significant relationship between social behaviors among children, such as aggression, hyperactivity, inattention, and more, and their exposure to widely used flame retardants.

Since chemical flame retardants do not protect us from fires but can actually cause serious health problems, it is incumbent on the Legislature to pass this bill to eliminate their use while ensuring more effective fire safety.

Summary

This bill amends Article 37 of the Environmental Conservation Law by inserting a new title 10 to prohibit the sale of residential upholstered furniture and mattresses that contain intentionally-added flame-retardants beginning on December 31, 2023 and the sale of any electronic displays that contains any intentionally-added organohalogen flame retardants in the enclosure.
