



HB0643 – Public Health - Cosmetic Products - Ingredient Prohibition

Presented to the Hon. Shane Pendergrass and Members of the House Health & Government Operations
February 16, 2021 1:30 p.m.

POSITION: SUPPORT

NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland urges Members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee to issue a **favorable report on HB0643 - Public Health - Cosmetic Products - Ingredient Prohibition** sponsored by Delegate Julie Palakovich-Carr.

Our organization is an advocate for reproductive health, rights, and justice. As part of our efforts to protect reproductive freedom for all Marylanders, we work to ensure every individual has the right to decide if, when, and how to form their families, and to parent in good health, in safety, and with dignity. Preventing harmful exposures to environmental chemicals is a priority for reproductive health professionals, and we support the prohibition of [certain chemicals in cosmetic products](#) which pose serious, life-long, and intergenerational threats to reproductive and sexual health.

Extensive research has demonstrated that chemical exposures, especially during critical and sensitive windows of development such as pregnancy, can lead to a myriad of health consequences that can manifest across individual's lifespan and potentially be transmitted to future generations. Chemical exposure during pregnancy can cross the placenta and accumulate in the fetus, exposing the fetus to pollutants before birth. Researchers have found a correlation between exposure to PFAS chemicals during pregnancy and adverse reproductive health outcomes including pregnancy-induced hypertension and preeclampsia, reduced birthweight, reduced fetal growth, and increased risk for thyroid disease in children.¹ Mercury exposure has been shown to cause miscarriages, preterm births, developmental disabilities, and birth defects as well as reduced fertility,² and paraben exposure has been linked to breast cancer.³ Phthalates are associated with cognitive, mental and behavioral effects such as lower IQ indices, pregnancy loss, hyperactivity, attention problems, problematic social communication, as well as with negative effects on the normal development of the reproductive system.⁴ Because low-income folks and people of color are disproportionately exposed to toxic chemicals, the intergenerational repercussions of chemical exposure for pregnant people reenforce the cycle of poverty and perpetuate systemic racism.

¹ Wang, Aolin et al. "Environmental influences on reproductive health: the importance of chemical exposures." *Fertility and sterility* vol. 106,4 (2016): 905-29. doi:10.1016/j.fertnstert.2016.07.1076

² Geir Bjørklund et al. "Mercury exposure and its effects on fertility and pregnancy outcome" *Basic and Clinical Pharmacology and Toxicology*. Vol 125, issue 4 (2019). <https://doi-org.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/10.1111/bcpt.13264>

³ Philip W. Harvey & Philippa Darbre. "Endocrine Disrupters and Human Health: Could Oestrogenic Chemicals in Body Care Cosmetics Adversely Affect Breast Cancer Incidence in Women?" *J. Appl. Toxicol.* 24, 167-176 (2004). DOI: 10.1002/jat.978

⁴ Polyxeni Nicolopoulou-Stamati et al. "Cosmetics as endocrine disruptors: are they a health risk?" *Reviews in Endocrine and Metabolic Disorders* volume 16, pages 373-383(2015). <https://doi-org.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/10.1007/s11154-016-9329-4>.

Many of the toxic chemicals HB0643 proposes to ban are prohibited in the European Union and other nations, and some are restricted from major U.S. retailers, including Target, Rite Aid, Walgreens and CVS Health.⁵ Extensive research has demonstrated links between these chemicals and various adverse reproductive and sexual health effects.

For these reasons, NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland **urges a favorable committee report on HB0643**. Thank you for your time and consideration.

⁵ >Target, Chemicals, <https://corporate.target.com/corporate-responsibility/planet/chemicals>

>Rite Aid, Chemical Policy: Restricted Substances List, <https://www.riteaid.com/corporate/chemical-policy>

>Walgreens Boots Alliance, Restricted Substances List,

https://www.walgreens.com/images/adaptive/si/pdf/WalgreensBootsAllianceRestrictedSubstancesList_11082018.pdf

>CVS Health, Store Brand Restricted Substances List, <https://cvshealth.com/sites/default/files/cvs-health-restricted-chemical-list-by-category.pdf>