



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 8, 2009

For more information contact Lindsay Dahl at
507-301-9679 (c), 612-870-3458 (w) or

ldahl@iatp.org

Minnesota is First State to Restrict Use of Bisphenol A in Baby Bottles and “Sippy” Cups

Governor Pawlenty Signs Two Landmark Pieces of Legislation into Law

St. Paul - Minnesota became the first state in the nation to ban the toxic chemical bisphenol A (BPA) from baby bottles and “sippy” cups after Governor Tim Pawlenty (R) signed the legislation into law. The BPA ban passed with significant bipartisan support; only 13 of 179 votes were cast in opposition to the ban. Pawlenty also signed the Toxic Free Kids Act, which creates a system to address the problem of toxics in children’s products.

“Passing Minnesota’s BPA ban sends a clear message that we no longer have to accept unnecessary exposures to toxic chemicals in baby bottles. Despite the massive lobbying efforts of the chemical industry, the value of protecting children from harm has prevailed,” said Lindsay Dahl of the Healthy Legacy coalition, which advocated for the ban. “The overwhelming work from our coalition partners and statewide grassroots pressure made this all possible.”

BPA was first synthesized as a sex hormone and can now be found in common household products. BPA leaches out of plastic bottles, cups and food can liners, (particularly when heated), and contaminates food, beverages and ultimately, the human body. More than 200 studies have found that low-dose exposures to BPA are linked to heart disease, cancer, neurological impairments and reproductive problems.

“This is a great victory for Minnesota’s parents. After January 1, 2011, parents will know that regardless of what store they are in, the baby bottles and “sippy” cups will be BPA-free,” stated Representative Karen Clark (DFL-Minneapolis), chief author of the House provision.

Other bills are pending in California, Connecticut, Michigan and New York.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has said that BPA is safe; however, that determination came under attack when it was learned that the majority of the studies used to evaluate the chemical were funded by the American Chemistry Council (the chemical industry’s trade group), and by firms whose clients include BPA manufacturers. The FDA’s advisory board criticized the agency’s position that BPA is safe, saying that the evaluation of the chemical was inadequate. The FDA has agreed to reconsider its position on BPA.

Responding to pressure from consumers, many retailers and manufacturers have taken the lead to eliminate BPA from their products. Wal-Mart, Toys-R-Us and Sears are just a few of the national chains that are phasing out baby bottles containing BPA. Earlier this spring, the nation's six largest baby bottle manufacturers announced that they have either already eliminated BPA or will phase it out of their product lines. Likewise, chemical maker Sunoco instituted a policy that it will no longer sell BPA to customers for use in food and water containers for children under three years.

Congress is also starting to take note of consumer demand for BPA-free products. Senator Diane Feinstein (D-CA) and Representative Edward Markey (D-MA) have introduced bills that would ban BPA from food and beverage containers.

"We expect that Minnesota's decision to ban BPA will have a major impact on the legislative debate in Washington, D.C. The next step is to secure a federal ban so people everywhere are protected from BPA in food and beverage containers," said Dahl.

Bisphenol A is really a signal for a larger problem at hand; there is virtually no oversight for chemicals before they are added to consumer products. The result is that chemicals and toxins like formaldehyde, 1,4 dioxane and lead end up in children's bath products, toys and more. The Toxic-Free Kids Act, authored by Representative Kate Knuth (DFL-New Brighton) and Senator Linda Schied (DFL- Brooklyn Park), is an innovative start to addressing the problem.

"Minnesota has been paying the price for not addressing toxics in consumer products. Costly clean ups and worried parents were two of my motivations for moving this bill forward," stated Rep. Knuth. "It is time that we start looking at ways to reduce sources of pollution, including chemicals, which can harm public health and our great outdoors."

The bill requires the Minnesota Department of Health to prioritize and evaluate chemicals used in consumer products based on their toxicity.

"The Toxic-Free Kids Act takes the first step on path to create a new way to do chemical policy. It also sends a clear signal to the chemical industry that the old way of doing business is no longer acceptable," stated Rep. Knuth.

###

Contacts:

| | |
|--|--------------|
| Rep. Karen Clark, chief author of BPA bill | 651-296-0294 |
| Sen. Sandy Rummel, chief author of BPA bill | 651-296-1253 |
| Rep. Kate Knuth, chief author of Toxic-Free Kids Act | 651-296-0141 |
| Sen. Linda Schied, chief author of Toxic-Free Kids Act | 651-296-8869 |

Healthy Legacy is a Minnesota-based public health coalition dedicated to safe products, made safely. We educate consumers, work with leading businesses and advance protective policies. For a full list of our 31 coalition members, visit our Web site at www.healthylegacy.org.