

# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Key Gubernatorial Appointees Urge Gov. Scott to Sign Toxics Bill to Protect Kids**

**Montpelier, VT** – Four members of the Chemicals of High Concern to Children Working Group are calling on Gov. Phil Scott to sign S.103 – legislation that will offer greater protections for children from toxic chemicals found in toys and other products marketed for kids.

The Working Group, established under Act 188, which was passed in 2014, includes members of the Scott administration as well as private individuals with expertise in children’s health, chemical toxicity, chemical regulation and manufacturing.

The letter takes note of children’s particular vulnerability to toxic chemicals, and adds, ***“This can include toxins in toys and other products marketed specifically for use by children.”***

Two of the authors of the letter are preeminent medical experts in this field – Dr. Ira M. Bernstein, M.D., of the Robert Larner, M.D. College of Medicine at the University of Vermont and UVM Medical Center; and Philip J. Landrigan, M.D., M.Sc., of the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. The two other authors are Martin Wolf, Director of Sustainability and Authenticity at Seventh Generation, and Paul Burns, Executive Director at the Vermont Public Interest Research Group.

The letter goes on to state that, ***“The science is clear that exposure to toxic chemicals early in life can trigger otherwise avoidable disease and dysfunction in children and adults. These negative outcomes can be prevented by avoiding chemical exposure in the first place.”***

The negative outcomes caused by toxic exposures are not merely tragedies for children and their families, they also cost Vermont citizens a tremendous amount of money to manage. Experts estimate that reducing the exposure of children to these toxins could save the state millions of dollars.

Recently, the governor’s spokesperson, Rebecca Kelley, suggested that it was uncertain whether Gov. Scott would sign S.103 into law. According to VTDigger, Kelley specifically cited as a concern for the governor, “certain provisions that would serve to nullify a stakeholder working group established in Act 188 of 2014.”

The four authors of the letter urging Gov. Scott to sign S.103 into law represent a majority of the non-Scott administration members of the Working Group that he’s concerned about.

The four address the governor’s concern directly, stating that S.103 “will not undermine the value of the Working Group. ***We are confident that our opinions and those of our appointed colleagues will be***

***heard. But even more importantly, the Health Commissioner will not be unnecessarily hindered or delayed from initiating reasonable steps to protect children from a product containing a known toxic chemical.”***

S.103 is the first piece of legislation dealing with chemical regulation that comes directly as a result of the discovery of PFOA contamination in private drinking wells and Bennington County and elsewhere around the state in 2016.

The proposed legislation passed overwhelmingly in the House and Senate. It contains new well water testing requirements as well as greater protections against toxic chemicals used in the manufacturing of products made specifically for children.

Lobbyists for chemical manufacturers, Associated Industries of Vermont and even some toy makers continue to fight the legislation, which would be among the strongest in the nation to protect children’s health.

“In the end, this comes down to a simple question for the governor,” said Paul Burns of VPIRG. “Does he believe that protecting children from toxic chemicals is more important than pleasing industry lobbyists?”

Vermonters will soon find out, as Gov. Scott is expected to make his decision within days.

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***A copy of the full letter urging Gov. Scott to sign S.103 into law is attached.***