

Testimony Before the House Health Care Committee on HB 3162 on March 20, 2013 from Tony Fuentes, President of VOIS Business Alliance, Owner of Milagros Boutique (a baby boutique in Portland), resides at 6504 NE 22nd Avenue, Portland, OR 97211:

Thank you for the opportunity to voice my support for HB 3162. Knowledge is power and right now the power of knowledge is lacking for families in Oregon on the presence of chemicals in the products they bring into their homes.

My support for this legislation is based on my natural concerns as a parent but also my sense of responsibility as a retailer of baby products.

My business, Milagros, is a baby and maternity boutique located in Portland. When my wife and I began Milagros nearly 10 years ago, we made it our goal to provide products that were natural, sustainable, and made with fair labor practices. Among other things, keeping BPA off our shelves was a choice we made from day one.

However it turns out that being truthful on chemical content is not a practice that comes naturally to every company. In one instance our business and our customers would've benefitted greatly by having a state standard that required truthful reporting on chemicals.

About seven years ago, we started offering reusable sports bottle for kids. These bottles were made by SIGG. A well-known Swiss manufacturer that had been making metal water bottles for nearly a century. Not only was SIGG based in Europe, their product was made in Europe.

Before offering these bottles, we asked the USA distributor if SIGG bottles were BPA-free? We were told that they keep their lining formula secret for trade reasons but that tests had never detected any BPA. Basically, it was implied that the product was BPA-free but that the company was unwilling to provide a definitive answer due to competitive concerns from rival products. There were countless China-made imitators coming into the market at that time, so the discretion seems understandable.

After a couple years of offering SIGG products, we noted concerns about BPA in their bottles being raised in some blogs and forums. We again asked SIGG if their product was BPA-free? We were given a similar response and provided with copies of lab reports showing a lack of BPA. Again, the clear implication was that the product was BPA-free.

About a year after that second response, the company sent a mass email to all USA outlets announcing that the new lining of their bottles was now BPA-free.

Well, my wife and I said at that time, "there ought to be a law." Five years later we hope that we'll finally get one. Thank you.