



VOICES UNITED.
OPPORTUNITY REIMAGINED.

February 15, 2021

House Committee on Energy and Environment
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support for HB 2495

Chair Marsh, Vice-Chair Helm, Vice-Chair Brock Smith and Members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Chris Coughlin. I am the Policy, Advocacy, and Engagement Director of Our Children Oregon. Our Children Oregon's (OCO) mission is to be a voice and force for the common good for all Oregon children, ensuring all children have the resources and opportunities they need to reach their full potential. OCO is the result of the merger between two historic Oregon non-profits: The Children's Trust Fund of Oregon and Children First for Oregon. We elevate data and lived experience to prioritize children and center communities. We continue to connect a community of 115 advocates, coalitions, and organizations through The Children's Agenda, a legislative agenda championing equitable state legislative policies and shared investments to improve the lives of Oregon's children and their families.

HB 2495: The Toxic Free Kids Act expansion bill is part of the 2021 Children's Agenda and the initial Toxic Free Kids Act was on the first Children's Agenda in 2015.

In 2015, the Oregon Legislature passed the initial Toxic Free Kids Act requiring manufacturers of children's products to disclose and eventually phase out high priority toxic chemicals. Although this made great progress, work still needs to be done. Since 2015, over 4,000 reports have been filed disclosing chemicals, including arsenic, lead and formaldehyde, in children's products. Exposure to toxics can cause negative health and educational outcomes like delayed brain development, learning challenges, weakened immune system, respiratory illnesses and even cancers. Toxic exposure in children's products is inexcusable – Oregon needs to do better to protect children from hazardous chemicals and avoid negative educational and health impacts.

We must strengthen the 2015 Toxic Free Kids Act to ensure all children are protected from toxic materials. This necessary update to the existing legislation will modernize the initial act and make an even greater impact on the lives of Oregon children. HB 2495 would address the following

The Children's Agenda

is a broad slate of equitable investments and policy solutions to meet the holistic needs of Oregon children, youth, and their families.



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issues and solutions:

- Allow OHA the ability to regulate classes of chemicals instead of individual chemicals to prevent previously used individual chemicals to merely be replaced with equally harmful chemicals
- Remove the limits on the number of chemicals that OHA can classify as high priority chemicals that impact the health of children
- Limit exemptions granted to manufacturers to three years
- Make it easier for parents to avoid purchasing products containing harmful toxics
- Streamline manufacturer reporting requirements and reduce program costs for both Oregon and Washington

Thousands of chemicals still lurk in products our kids use every day, and children are far more vulnerable to toxics than adults. We need to ensure the health and safety of our children by strengthening the Toxic Free Kids Act to protect Oregonian children from harmful chemicals.

Thank you for your consideration and your service. We urge you to support HB 2495.

On behalf of the Our Children Oregon team and our Children Agenda partners,

Chis Coughlin, Policy, Advocacy, and Engagement Director

View the 2021 Children's Agenda at www.ourchildrenoregon.org/2021-childrens-agenda