



May 4, 2023

TO: Senate Energy and Environment Committee  
FROM: Our Children Oregon, The Children's Agenda  
RE: Support for HB 3043

Dear Chair Sollman, Vice-Chair Findley, and Members of the Committee,

Our Children Oregon (OCO) is a statewide organization that advances equitable policies, data and research, and whole-child advocacy. The Children's Agenda, convened by OCO, brings together ~130 organizations statewide to create a holistic legislative agenda dedicated to improving the well-being of Oregon's children, youth, and families. Our collective created a 2023 legislative agenda that focuses on community-driven solutions to provide access and opportunities for all children and families.

Exposure to toxic chemicals can have a lasting and detrimental impact on a child's lifelong development and health. Children are particularly vulnerable to exposure because their bodies are smaller than adults, and they also interact with our environment much differently than adults do. They are more likely to touch things around them and put things in their mouths - that is what babies do to learn - so we must do what we can to ensure that products brought into homes minimize the risk of toxic chemicals being part of their environment.

In 2015, the Toxic Free Kids Act was part of the 2015 Children's Agenda, and we are returning in 2023 to urge the support of HB 3043. The Toxic Free Kids Act is about making safer products available for *all* communities, as opposed to only those who can afford them. We have always supported the requirement for manufacturers to disclose and phase out toxic ingredients in products used by Oregon's children. Since 2015, more than 4,000 new reports have been filed with Oregon Health Authority (OHA) on chemicals of concern used in kids' products — including arsenic, phthalates, and formaldehyde.

**HB 3043 builds on the success of Oregon's Toxic Free Kids Act by strengthening protections for children's health and streamlining business reporting requirements:**

- *Allowing OHA to regulate by classes of chemicals as opposed to individual chemicals one by one.* This will prevent harmful chemicals from being phased out, only to be replaced with closely related and equally harmful ones.

- *Removing limits in how many chemicals can be added at a time for regulation.* Currently, OHA is limited to adding five chemicals for regulation every three years. According to the EPA, more than 1,500 new chemicals are introduced into commerce each year.
- *Limiting exemptions granted to manufacturers to three years, rather than in perpetuity.* New products are developed every year, and materials updates can and should be made when safer alternatives are available.
- *Streamlining manufacturer reporting requirements.* This will reduce program costs and make it easier for consumers to avoid products containing toxins by adding brand names and models to reporting requirements.

We thank you for your time and efforts to improve child well-being across the state. We urge your support of HB 3043 to strengthen and modernize Oregon's Toxic Free Kids Act.

From the Our Children Oregon Team,

Ivy Major-McDowall, Policy and Advocacy Director

View the 2023 Children's Agenda at [www.ourchildrenoregon.org/2023-childrens-agenda](http://www.ourchildrenoregon.org/2023-childrens-agenda)