



Solutions for a
Toxic-Free Tomorrow

Testimony of Sarah Woodbury, Vice President of Policy and Advocacy, Defend Our Health
In Support of LD 317 "An Act to Enact the Safe Cosmetics Act "
Before the Environment and Natural Resources Committee
February 12, 2025

Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera and members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee. My name is Sarah Woodbury. I am the Vice President of Policy and Advocacy for Defend Our Health. Defend Our Health's mission is to make sure that everyone has equal access to safe food and drinking water, healthy homes and products that are toxic-free and climate friendly. I am here to testify in support of LD 317 "An Act to Enact the Safe Cosmetics Act".

LD 317 would ban the distribution and sale of cosmetics that contain certain intentionally added chemicals. These chemicals can lead to health impacts such as breast and other cancers, birth defects, damage to the reproductive system, organ system toxicity and endocrine disruption. Breast cancer and other chronic diseases have been increasing over the past 50 years and this can be linked to the chemicals we are exposed to on a daily basis in cosmetics and other consumer products. For some of these chemicals, even small amounts are harmful, particularly to growing fetuses, infants, and children. We must look at our toxic exposure more holistically. A person is not just exposed to something like phthalates in just our cosmetics. They are found in more than just cosmetics so the exposure is compounded. This goes for many of the chemicals on this list. We should be doing all that we can to limit our exposure pathways and cosmetics is one such pathway.

Individuals that work as stylist or barbers have higher risks of exposure. The International Agency for Research on Cancer listed the careers of hairdresser and barber as probable carcinogens because of their exposures to toxic chemicals in the workplace¹. Additionally, when you look at cosmetics marketed towards people of color, those cosmetics contain more hazardous chemicals than cosmetics targeted towards white people, adding to the already higher level of exposure to toxics for people of color. According to a study by the American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology "Compared with white women, women of color have higher levels of beauty product-related environmental chemicals in their bodies, independent of

¹ Occupational Exposures of Hairdressers and Barbers and Personal Use of Hair Colourants; Some Hair Dyes, Cosmetic Colourants, Industrial Dyestuffs and Aromatic Amines. IARC Monographs on the Evaluation of Carcinogenic Risks to Humans Volume 57. 1993



socioeconomic status.”² They are more likely to use products that have unsafe chemicals. Chemicals such as formaldehyde and formaldehyde releasers that are in hair straighteners, or mercury which is in skin lighteners.

Maine is not the only state looking at banning toxic chemicals in cosmetics. California, Vermont, Washington, and Oregon have all passed legislation to ban several chemicals in cosmetics, and personal care products. Maine should join these states in protecting their citizens from toxics in cosmetics.

This bill is similar to an amended bill that passed this committee and the legislature last session but unfortunately didn't get funded. The original text of that legislation had several other chemicals listed that are also harmful to human health that we think should be included in this legislation. I have included a possible amendment at the end of my testimony and would urge this committee to consider expanding the list of chemicals in this bill to protect human health. The additional chemicals are already banned in Washington, Vermont, and Oregon.

Thank you

Amended language

§3303. Prohibition on sale and distribution of certain cosmetic products

1. Prohibition. Beginning January 1, 2027, a person may not distribute, sell or offer for sale in this State a cosmetic product containing any of the following intentionally added ingredients: lead; mercury; Ortho-phthalates and their esters, dibutyl phthalate, dicyclohexyl, hexyl phthalate, diisobutyl phthalate, diisodecyl phthalate, diisononyl phthalate, diisooctyl phthalate, diethylhexyl phthalate, diethyl phthalate and benzyl butyl phthalate; formaldehyde releasers, including formaldehyde, paraformaldehyde; quaternium-15; methylene glycol; m-phenylenediamine; o-phenylenediamine; triclosan; triclocarban; or nonylphenol.

² Zota, A. R., & Shamasunder, B. (2017, August 15). *The environmental injustice of beauty: Framing chemical exposures from ...* American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology. [https://www.ajog.org/article/S0002-9378\(17\)30862-1/fulltext](https://www.ajog.org/article/S0002-9378(17)30862-1/fulltext)