

Testimony of Sarah Woodbury, Director of Advocacy, Defend Our Health
In Support of LD 1908 "An Act to Enact the Safe Cosmetics Act "
Before the Environment and Natural Resources Committee
May 15, 2023

Senator Brenner, Representative Gramlich and members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee My name is Sarah Woodbury I am the director of 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 1908 "An Act to Enact the Safe Cosmetics Act"

LD 1908, modeled after similar legislation currently making its way through the New York legislature, 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 Industry will argue that small amounts of exposure to toxic chemicals in cosmetics is totally safe and this is simply false 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 to 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

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 socioeconomic status"¹

Maine is not the only state looking at banning toxic chemicals in cosmetics, along with New York state as mentioned above, Vermont and Oregon are looking at legislation to ban several chemicals in cosmetics, Washington state has a bill currently sitting on the Governor's desk,

¹ 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)



and, while not as extensive as this legislation, California passed legislation in 2020 to ban 24 separate toxic chemicals in personal care products. Maine should join these states in protecting their citizens from toxics in cosmetics.

It's our understanding that the sponsor of this bill is asking the committee to carry over this bill to the next session. We support that request. With such limited time left in the session, there simply isn't time to tackle this important yet complex issue. Carrying it over will give the sponsor and stakeholder an opportunity to both educate the committee and perfect the legislation.

Thank you