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Maine Indoor Air Quality Council Testimony in Opposition to LD 2116: An Act to Require Flame-Retardant Seats in School Buses

Senator Chipman, Representative Crafts, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation:

Flame-retardant chemicals have been banned from Maine upholstered furniture since 2019. The Maine Indoor Air Quality Council considers the inside of motor vehicles an indoor environment similar in function to indoor environments inside of buildings. (A copy of our policy statement on motor vehicles is shown at the end of this testimony.)

It is the Council's opinion that if these chemicals are banned in upholstered furnishings inside buildings they should also be banned in upholstered furnishings inside motor vehicles.

Exposure and Health Considerations

- The National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences indicates that flame retardant chemicals "can leach from products into the air and then attach to dust, food, and water, which can be (inhaled or) ingested."
- NIEHS indicates "increasing scientific evidence shows that many of these chemicals may harm animals and humans" and that "children are more vulnerable to toxic effects because their brains and other organs are still developing."
- Adverse health effects may include endocrine and thyroid disruption, immunotoxicity, reproductive toxicity, cancer, and adverse effects on fetal and child development and neurobehavioral function.
- Source control is the primary means of reducing exposure to indoor pollutants. Source control is the process of removing pollutant sources from the environment. What's not there cannot harm people.

The Maine Indoor Air Quality Council would be happy to provide additional information to the Committee as it deliberates LD 2116.

Respectfully submitted by:

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Christine G. Crocker'.

Christine G. Crocker, Executive Director
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Telephone: 207-626-8115; E-mail: christy@maineindoorair.org
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Motor Vehicles as Indoor Environments

Adopted by the MIAQC Board of Directors on February 6, 2003

Indoor air quality is a health concern because it constitutes an enclosed environment in which pollutants can easily build up to harmful levels. While much attention is appropriately placed on the built environment, motor vehicles also constitute an enclosed environment warranting consideration. Examples of harmful indoor air pollution in motor vehicles include environmental tobacco smoke and engine exhaust. While the methods for achieving healthful air quality inside motor vehicles may differ from those regarding the built environment, the inclusion of motor vehicles within the Council's purview is appropriate for the underlying public health reasons.