

An Act for a Competitive Economy Through Safer Alternatives to Toxic Chemicals
HD 3093

Lynn Wolbarst, LWVMA Environmental Specialist

The League of Women Voters urges you to support “An Act for a Competitive Economy Through Safer Alternatives to Toxic Chemicals” – HD 3093

Lead Sponsors: Rep. Jay Kaufman and Sen. Steven Tolman

Purpose of the Bill: Works with Massachusetts businesses to replace designated toxic and widely-used chemicals in consumer products with safer alternatives. It also seeks to improve the competitiveness and growth potential for Massachusetts businesses by transitioning to innovative products and clean technologies that will also benefit public health and the environment.

Background: There is a regulatory gap that allows products such as toys, cosmetics, electronics, and cookware to reach consumers with minimal oversight or regulation. This bill creates a comprehensive, science-based, economically feasible toxic-chemicals policy in Massachusetts that specifies certain toxic chemicals in wide consumer use to be replaced with safer alternatives

The bill expands the Toxics Use Reduction Act (TURA) to include consumer products. Since taking effect in 1989, TURA has helped Massachusetts manufacturers reduce their toxic chemical use by 40 %, toxic byproducts by 71 % and toxic releases to the environment by 91 %. The program has been recognized as a national and international model for pollution prevention.

Talking Points:

- Research in the US and internationally recognizes the toxicity of a variety of chemicals used in consumer products (e.g. lead in toys, flame retardants in electronics, endocrine disrupting chemicals in plastics, organophosphate pesticides in lawn care), known to cause cancer, asthma, autism, birth defects, and diabetes.
- Priority chemicals for replacement would be chosen based on:
 1. Specific uses that damage the health of children or workers
 2. Opportunities to strengthen the MA economy and create jobs
- Funds for the implementation of these programs would come from fees on these toxic chemicals. The funds would also help businesses with costs associated with transitioning to safer chemicals or alternatives
- Businesses would only have to transition to a safer alternative from a toxic chemical if a feasible, economically-viable alternative exists (i.e., digital thermometers as a safer alternative to mercury thermometers).

- This legislation would help Massachusetts stay competitive in global markets - over 37% of Massachusetts trade is with the European Union's member states who have stricter chemical policies than the US.