

Greetings:

After watching the video of the latest meeting of the Education Committee, and also watching last year's meeting where Patricia Coppollini testified, I have several comments.

First of all, I appreciate the great effort expended by the committee to grapple with this complex issue.

The 2023 February meeting referred to a future meeting with a consultant from the U.of Iowa. That must have been Dr.Keri C. Hornbuckle, a leader in PCB research, whose position is that "Our research has shown that the worst case for human exposure (ed.note: to PCBs) is a school room" , Considering the potentially serious health consequences for students, support staff and teachers (and remember that 75% of the staff are female and therefore vulnerable to reproductive consequences), I urge the committee to proceed with a sense of urgency.

Also in the 2023 meeting, a future meeting with Peter Welch was mentioned, with, I assume, the hope of possible federal funding. I have tried to track the status of the "Get Toxic Substances Out of Schools" bill but failed to find any mention of it after 2022. It would provide generous funding for Vermont's efforts, I believe, and its passage should be encouraged.

At this year's meeting the Environmental Contingency Fund was briefly mentioned as a potential source of funding. I researched that, (10 V,S.A. #1283)and found that it covers "actual or threatened release (and "release" specifically includes leaking and emissions of PCBs in schools) to the environment of any pollutant or contaminant; funding measures to protect long-range public health, including reimbursing municipalities."

H193 - 2023 relates to increasing revenues to this fund and was referred to the Committee on Environment and Energy.

I wonder if the Vermont Bond Bank, with its low-cost funding sources ,could be tapped as a possibility for school reimbursements.

I understand the pressure that legislators are feeling from taxpayers. I think that the best response is to provide up-to-date information as to the very real health risks facing students, faculty and support staff (an excellent summary of those are available from our own Health Dept website -

<https://www.healthvermont.gov/environment/school/polychlorinated-biphenyls-pcbs>

as well as leaving no stone unturned as far as finding funding.

Lastly, I do not think that the A.G.'s concern is trivial; that waning support or even the illusion of such for testing and remediation in Vermont schools, might jeopardize the lawsuit against Monsanto/Bayer. I believe, based on other product liability claims filed against them, that they are acutely aware of community sentiments in terms of their willingness to settle such claims.

Thanks for listening.

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