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VBSR Supports Toxic Chemical Reform

March 12, 2014

Re: S.239, An act relating to the regulation of toxic substances

Dear member of the Vermont Senate:

Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility is a statewide business association with over 1000 members--large and small from a variety of business types. Our members generate \$4 billion in revenue annually and employ 15% of the state's workforce.

We support S.239 and believe identifying and removing dangerous chemicals from everyday products protects public health and supports a market for safer and greener products.

The main federal law regulating the use of toxic chemicals in consumer products has not been updated in 34 years. The 1976 Toxic Substances Control Act fails to protect consumers or help educate businesses to make good decisions regarding the safety of chemicals in their products. More than three-quarters of the 80,000 chemicals now being produced are grandfathered in and do not fall under the law's authority.

Vermont should act when the federal government fails to protect consumers from dangerous products. Many studies over several decades show that exposure to the wrong chemical results in a wide-range of health consequences, including learning and developmental disabilities in children.

75% of small business owners support stricter regulation of chemicals produced and used in everyday products – American Sustainable Business Council, October 2012 poll

Regulating the use of toxic chemicals in consumer products will create a stronger, healthier and more sustainable economy. VBSR believes giving consumers more information about dangerous chemicals found in products they purchase will:

- Expand the market in Vermont for clean, green and safe products.
- Increase transparency in the supply chain for the public and businesses to make informed decisions about what they purchase and what they sell.
- Spur new innovation that seeks safer alternatives to dangerous chemicals, leading to more sustainable products.
- Lower the risk and costs associated with illnesses resulting from chemical exposures.

The sponsors of S.239 worked with several VBSR businesses to craft legislation that protects public health and is pro-business. The version passed by the Senate Health and Welfare Committee contains additional significant compromises, but is still a step forward for the state.

VBSR believes that consumers should have the necessary information about the safety of chemicals in everyday products they use and that the state should work with the industry to find safe alternatives and phase the harmful chemicals out of use. We encourage the committee to support this legislation.

255 SOUTH CHAMPLAIN ST, SUITE 11, BURLINGTON, VT 05401 **PHONE:** (802) 862-8347

E-MAIL: INFO@VBSR.ORG **WEB:** WWW.VBSR.ORG

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