

**Statement to the Vermont Senate Committee on Health and Welfare
Regarding S. 239 - An act relating to the regulation of toxic substances
Submitted by Ashley Orgain, Manager Mission Advocacy and Outreach,
Seventh Generation
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Seventh Generation is the nation's leading brand of household and personal care products designed with human health and the environment. Established in 1988, the Burlington, Vermont based company employs over 130 people, and remains an independent, privately-held company distributing products to natural food stores, supermarkets, mass merchants, and online retailers across the United States and Canada.

On behalf of all of us at Seventh Generation, I want to thank the Committee for this opportunity to testify in support of S. 239, an act relating to the regulation of toxic substances

Thank you to Senator Lyons and the rest of the committee for your leadership on health and environmental policy. We appreciate the leadership you all have provided over a number of years to reduce exposure to toxic chemicals that harm human health, and for your continued work as reflected in S. 239.

Seventh Generation has been working passionately for years to eliminate exposure to toxic chemicals that harm human health by supporting sound state and federal toxics control legislation.

We are extremely pleased that in the last legislative session, the legislature unanimously passed a ban on the toxic flame retardant chlorinated Tris.

S. 239 provides an opportunity to move away from the chemical-by-chemical regulatory approach and advance a more systemic solution to protecting public health.

We believe the state needs to pass legislation that phases out the use of toxic substances in consumer products because federal regulation is failing to protect the health of Vermonters.

Our nation's laws on chemical safety are not working. The current federal law, the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA), is outdated and inadequate. As a result, tens of thousands of potentially harmful chemicals present in the marketplace when the law was enacted, and introduced to the marketplace since, are without proper testing by the companies that produce them, and without disclosure to regulators or the public by the companies that use them.

More than 30 years of environmental health studies have led to a growing consensus that chemicals are playing a role in the incidence and prevalence of many diseases and disorders in the United States, including: autism, asthma, breast cancer, leukemia, and learning and development disabilities.

In general, these and other common diseases or disorders are the result of many factors, but many chemicals, by themselves or in combination with other chemical and non-chemical factors, can be harmful to multiple systems in the body, increasing the risk of adverse health outcomes.

The facts about chemicals in our bodies are staggering. According to the Centers for Disease Control, more than 200 chemicals have been detected in people's body fluid, including breast milk and the cord blood of newborns.

I'm here today as a representative of Seventh Generation, but also as a mother of a 2 year old. As a state, we are allowing the lack of regulation of chemicals to literally poison our children.

But there is a better way. There is a solution, a solution that makes sense for business, our customers and their families, the environment and the Vermont brand.

S. 239 seeks to implement a program to more systematically assess the chemicals of highest concern, identify which products sold in Vermont contain these chemicals, and phase the worst chemicals out of use in consumer products.

After 25 years in business, Seventh Generation serves as a proof point that business can operate successfully within these guardrails.

Seventh Generation has come up with our own rigorous ingredient review standard in hopes to keep our products free from chemicals of concern, due to the lack of regulatory rigor in this area. We adhere to the Precautionary Principle, meaning that we will not use an ingredient in our products until we are confident it is safe. This approach is fundamental to our approach to ingredient selection and product formulation.

As a pioneer in corporate responsibility, Seventh Generation has a long-standing commitment to ingredient disclosure. We believe full ingredient transparency is necessary for consumers to verify the health and safety of the products they use. We fully disclose the ingredients in our products on the label. In addition, the ingredients and material safety data sheets are available on our website, as are disclosures of trace materials that may be present when known.

Seventh Generation practices transparency because we believe consumers have a right to know what's in the products they buy, but also because it is the right thing to do. Transparency has built trust among our consumers and driven brand loyalty, growing our business year over year.

As a mission driven business, we hope our products make a difference in the lives of the people they touch—from their development to their production, purchase, use, and disposal. We also aspire to be a model for other businesses, holding ourselves responsible for the safety of the products we bring to market. S. 239 will help level the playing field by shifting the burden of proof from the government to industry, and by driving adoption of and innovation in green chemistry.

If Vermont joins the ranks of California, Maine and Washington in passing toxic chemical safety legislation, we'll yet again assert our leadership position as the Green Mountain State, an incubator for socially responsible business.

The proposed legislation would not only protect Vermonters from exposure to toxic chemicals, but also drive more competitive, innovative, and economically sustainable industries.

Thank you for your leadership on this important issue. We look forward to working with your committee and the full legislature to move meaningful reform legislation forward.