



TOXICS ACTION CENTER

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Testimony Regarding the Adoption of Proposed Connecticut High Performance Building Standards April 11, 2008

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on the proposed standards for Connecticut High Performance Buildings.

Toxics Action Center is a public health and environmental organization that works side by side with communities to clean up and prevent pollution. I write in support of recommendations made by the Connecticut Foundation for Environmentally Safe Schools (ConnFESS) regarding the adoption of proposed Connecticut High Performance Building Standards. Specifically I would like to support policies promoting and protecting indoor air quality for school occupants.

Toxics Action Center has worked side by side with ConnFESS for many years to protect school-building occupants across Connecticut from environmental health problems. Many of the proposed standards are a step in the right direction, but need further development to truly ensure healthy and high performance school buildings.

Poor indoor air quality can be caused by everything from building materials that release toxic gases, to mold, to second hand smoke, dust and pesticides and cleaning materials. The average person spends the vast majority of their time inside a building of some kind. In fact, 20% of the population, nearly 60 million people across the country, spends their days in our elementary and secondary schools.

The most documented of the indoor air quality problems has occurred with schools. In the mid-1990s, studies showed that 1 in 5 of our nation's 110,000 schools reported unsatisfactory indoor air quality, and 1 in 4 schools reported poor ventilation—which directly impacts air quality. Students are at a greater risk because of the hours spent in school facilities and because children are especially susceptible to pollutants. The most obvious impact on public health from poor indoor air quality is asthma.

Today schools across Connecticut continue to suffer from poor indoor air quality and other environmental hazards. Toxics Action Center receives calls regularly from health-affected teachers, concerned parents, and other residents across the state expressing new concerns with school indoor air quality and requesting help in making school buildings safe for all occupants.

Ultimately, people deserve safe places to live, work and play. In particular schools should be a priority because children are more susceptible to toxic exposure. Furthermore there is a need to prevent problems before it is too late. Building construction should be conducted with an eye towards proper ventilation and materials to avoid moisture that might cause mold. Toxic chemicals should be phased out of products that we could find on the shelves, and out of the materials we come into contact with every day in our homes.

Toxics Action Center supports the recommendations made by the Connecticut Foundation for Environmentally Safe Schools regarding the adoption of proposed Connecticut high performance building standards:

Toxics Action Center urges you to consider the recommendations made by ConnFESS. Thank you very much for your consideration.

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Community Organizer
Toxics Action Center