

Why Faith Communities support the Toxic-Free Kids and Families Act

ESHB 2545



Why should people of faith care about toxic flame retardants in our homes?

We are called to take care of each other, to be good parents, to love our children, and to love our neighbors, including the most vulnerable among us (Matthew 25:31-46, Luke 10:27). In our efforts to provide safe and comfortable environments for children, many of us have inadvertently exposed them to flame retardants, toxic chemicals that are linked to cancer, hormone disruption, lower IQ, thyroid issues, and obesity.

These dangerous chemicals appear in household products such as nursing pillows, car seats, changing pads, and the foam in chair and couch cushions. Because young children spend more time with their faces close to furniture and are more likely to put things in their mouths, they have higher exposure to toxic chemicals.

Toxic flame retardants risk the health of our community members: children, families, pets, and public servants. Not only are our families at risk, fire fighters suffer occupational exposures by inhaling fumes from these toxic chemicals while fires smolder as they risk their lives to save others. We can and must do better.

Chlorinated Tris compounds including TDCPP and TCEP as well as antimony trioxide have been designated as carcinogens. PBDEs, HBCD, and TBBPA are persistent toxic chemicals that last a long time in the environment. The good news is that there are safer alternatives.

We are called to care for the planet (Gen. 2:15). Chemical flame retardants contaminate house dust and indoor air when they escape from foam in everyday household items, exposing people and animals to dangerous levels of cancer-causing compounds. Poisoning our living environments is not good stewardship.

We are called to work for justice (Micah 6:8). Low-income families in particular are at greater risk than children in homes that can afford more natural alternative products. All children should be able to live in safe environments without toxic materials threatening their health.

Current state law prevents our state's health agency from prohibiting these cancer-causing and other harmful chemicals. Other states, including Oregon, California, and Minnesota can prohibit them. It's time for Washington to step up and ban these toxic flame retardants once and for all.



Securing a Toxic-Free Future for our Families

The Toxic-Free Kids and Families Act will:

- Ban 5 flame retardants (TCEP, TDCPP, TBBPA, HBCD, and Deca (BDE)) in children's products and home furnishings.
- Give the state's health department the authority to ban through rulemaking additional cancer-causing and other harmful chemicals from being used as flame retardants in children's products and furniture.
- Ensure that safer alternatives are available.

Top 5 Reasons to Support the Toxic-Free Kids and Families Act ESHB 2545

1. Protects all kids from harmful chemicals

The Toxic-Free Kids and Families Act will remove an immediate threat to the health of our children.

2. Safer alternatives are available

Many manufacturers and retailers have set policies to phase out the use of chemical flame retardants.

3. Invests in prevention for long-term savings

The Toxic-Free Kids and Families Act prevents further exposure to toxic chemicals, saving money on health care and environmental clean up.

4. Supported by a broad coalition of people and organizations across the state

Doctors, nurses, faith communities, parents, fire fighters, health advocates, and environmental groups all support the Toxic-Free Kids and Families Act.

5. Keeps Washington a state leader and builds momentum for federal action

Most agree that Congress should pass chemical safety reform. However, federal change is slow and Washington must keep passing laws to protect our citizens until Congress steps up.

What We Can Do: Show Religious Support for Keeping Our Kids Toxic-Free!

- Our elected officials need to know that there is diverse faith community support for protecting children and families from toxic chemicals. **Call the Washington State Legislative Hotline (1-800-562-6000) and ask your legislators to support the Toxic-Free Kids and Families Act, ESHB 2545.** Hotline operators can tell you who your legislators are based on your address.
- **Join Earth Ministry in Olympia** to show your support for the Toxic-Free Kids and Families Act. See our website for these advocacy opportunities!
- **Educate your community of faith about this issue and the proposed law.** You can learn more from Earth Ministry (www.earthministry.org) and Washington Toxics Coalition (www.watoxics.org).
- **Support companies that already avoid toxic chemicals.** Companies that offer safe products include Boppy, BabyLuxe Organic, Baby Bjorn, Orbit Baby, Eco Balanza, Soaring Heart, Furniture, and Bean Products.

