

# **Congresswoman Chellie Pingree introduces bill to ban flame retardant**

## **Deca-bromine present in a range of products, linked to developmental problems in children**

*EMBARGOED until 11:00 am Friday*

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This week Congresswoman Chellie Pingree introduced legislation to ban products containing deca-bromine. The Deca-bromine Elimination and Control Act (H.R. 4394) would phase out the chemical, commonly used as a flame retardant, by 2013 and require companies to use safer alternatives.

“I am extremely proud to introduce legislation that will protect our children from a chemical that poses an enormous threat to their very development,” said Pingree.

“Children absorb the toxin not only through strollers and car seats, but household dust and even their mothers’ breast milk. Since its presence has become nearly impossible to avoid, we need to ban deca’s use in all products.”

It is estimated that almost 100 million pounds of deca-bromine may be used in the manufacture of plastic pallets in the coming years. These plastic pallets are used primarily to transport food and deca-bromine-laden dust from plastic pallets has the potential to come into contact with food and food packaging.

The chemical has been linked to various health risks, including intellectual and physical developmental problems in children, and compromised immune systems and interference with reproductive hormones in adults.

Pingree’s daughter, Maine Speaker of the House Hannah Pingree, sponsored successful legislation to ban the chemical in Maine in 2006. “Today I am honored to continue the long tradition of bringing good ideas from Maine to Washington,” Congresswoman Pingree said.

Michael Belliveau, Executive Director of the Environmental Health Center, praised Pingree’s legislation.

“This legislation is critically needed to prevent learning and development disabilities by protecting the developing brain of children from the known toxic effects of DecaBDE and its breakdown products,” Belliveau said. “This legislation offers a common sense, science-based solution to a serious environmental health threat.”

“I applaud Congresswoman Pingree’s efforts calling for a national ban of the harmful flame retardant deca-BDE,” said David Littell, Commissioner of the Maine Department of Environmental Protection. “In 2007, Maine passed legislation to replace this hazardous chemical with safer alternatives – a national ban will ensure that children all

across the country are protected from further exposure to a chemical that has been found in everything from household dust to breast milk.”

The association representing professional fire fighters also welcomed the bill.

“For several years, the IAFF and our affiliates from coast to coast have been working to get Decabrom off the market,” said Harold A. Schaitberger, General President, International Association of Fire Fighters. “Congresswoman Pingree has courageously taken the lead on the issue in Congress.”