

CHANGE
Californians for a Healthy & Green Economy



June 30, 2017

The Honorable Bill Quirk
Chair, Assembly Committee on Environmental Safety and Toxic Materials
1020 N Street, Room 171
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 258 (Lara) – SUPPORT

Dear Chairperson Quirk:

The undersigned organizations write to express our strong support for Senate Bill 258. This bill will require manufacturers of cleaning products to disclose the ingredients in their products to consumers on the label and on their website. It is a reflection of close negotiation with industry stakeholders to strike a balance with their concerns while providing consumers and workers information they need to protect themselves and their families from hazardous substances in the home and on the job.

While most consumers use a wide array of soaps, detergents, bleaching agents, softeners, scourers, polishes, and other specialized cleaners to keep their homes sparkling clean, workers that use these products all day long and for multiple days a week are at risk of higher exposure to any hazardous substances found in these products.

Cleaning ingredients vary in the type of health hazard they pose. Some cause acute, or immediate, hazards such as skin or respiratory irritation, watery eyes, or chemical burns, while others are associated with chronic, or long-term, health effects such as cancer. In fact, janitorial workers and domestic workers, especially house cleaners, have higher rates of asthma, respiratory illnesses, and birth defects than other workers.

Scientific studies have shown that toxic chemicals found in cleaning products have been detected in urine, breast milk, and blood – including the umbilical cord blood of newborns. Given the serious health implications of these toxic chemicals, consumers and workers alike are demanding to know what is in the products they use and are exposed to daily. Unfortunately, unlike food, retail cosmetics and drugs, manufacturers are not legally required to disclose ingredients in most cleaning products. Without this requirement, consumers and workers are left in the dark about what is in the cleaning products they buy and use.

We all deserve to know what is in our cleaning products, so we can make educated decisions about what is safest for ourselves, our families, and employees in the workplace. We support this bill because we know that disclosure of ingredients incentivizes industry to develop safer products, which in turn will improve the health outcomes for the most vulnerable communities.

We strongly believe that all communities deserve safe products- regardless of race, neighborhood, or socio-economic status. For this reason, we are working with the co-sponsors to try to identify a solution to the on-going challenge of downstream dumping of older, more toxic products in discount/ dollar stores as newer, safer products come to market.

SB 258 provides a clear set of rules for workers, consumers, and companies on how ingredients should be listed on the package of the item being sold, as well as online. While this won't solve all the exposure problems associated with cleaning products, this is a critical first step. We look forward to working with the author, co-sponsors, and other supporters to find a comprehensive solution to this outstanding environmental justice issue.

We urge your support for SB 258.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Alcantar
Director
CHANGE Coalition

Diana Vasquez
Policy Advocate
California Environmental Justice Alliance

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Chief Executive Officer
Center for Environmental Health

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