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A Call for Safer Chemicals to Protect Our Health and Environment

Recognizing that every Oregonian is accumulating a body burden of toxic chemicals associated with health impacts, we, call for common-sense chemical policies to ensure that only the safest chemicals are used in Oregon.

Whereas:

- *Everyone has a right to live in a safe and healthy environment, without exposures to toxic chemicals that threaten development and long-term health;*
- *Oregon needs a healthy environment with thriving wildlife and clean air, water, soil, and food for all;*
- *Some populations are more vulnerable to chemical exposures – including pregnant women, infants, children, and workers;*
- *Safe and clean design of chemicals, materials, and products is good for businesses, workers, communities, and ecosystems; and*
- *Using chemicals wisely will ensure a healthy Oregon for future generations.*

We support new approaches that will:

Provide complete information on chemical ingredients and their toxicity

The burden to prove that chemicals are safe before they are allowed on the market will fall to producers/manufacturers. Chemical safety data will be made available to the public and regulators. This data must take in to account impacts on vulnerable populations. Due to the size of this information management task, Oregon should support the development of an interstate clearinghouse for chemical ingredients.

Categorize chemicals into levels of concern

The public, businesses, workers and consumers should have the tools to distinguish among chemicals. A chemical categorization system will identify safer chemicals, chemicals to avoid, and chemicals which lack adequate safety data.

Manage chemicals based on hazards and substitute those of highest concern with safer alternatives

Oregon would use criteria to identify chemicals of concern and have the authority to restrict certain chemical uses. State agencies should have the authority to identify, collect data on and mandate the replacement of chemicals of highest concern.

Establish tools to move Oregon toward a healthier environment

In order to move the market toward safer chemicals, Oregon should:

- ❖ Invest in and build in-state institutional alternatives research capacity.

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- ❖ Promote sustainable procurement policies for state, local, and municipal governments and other large institutions such as hospitals, universities, and schools.
- ❖ Ensure that all communities can participate in new green economy by creating incentives for investment.
- ❖ Create tax incentives for and provide technical assistance to firms working toward safer alternatives.
- ❖ Increase and direct research and economic development dollars to promote safer alternatives, particularly in key sectors ripe for alternatives.

Ensure that workers and impacted communities are protected.

Oregon needs to address both concerns around loss of jobs from a transition to safer chemicals and whether alternatives are indeed safer. This means incorporating policies that support a just transition to cleaner, safer jobs. Oregon should also ensure that chemicals of concern to environmental justice communities are prioritized.

Provide adequate funding and enforcement

Oregon needs to create the funding and enforcement mechanisms necessary to successfully implement chemical policy reform. Resources for technical assistance and program implementation are essential to ensuring a level playing field for businesses.