



## CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL LAW ASSOCIATION

# ***MEDIA RELEASE***

---

301-130 Spadina Ave. St. Toronto ON M5V 2L4 • ph: 416/960-2284 • fx: 416/960-9392  
Web site: [www.cela.ca](http://www.cela.ca)

---

### **CELA Supports Ban on Phthalates in Children's Products Scientific Evidence Points to Need for Regulation of Additional Phthalate Sources**

**Toronto, January 18, 2011:** The Canadian Environmental Law Association (CELA) strongly supports the federal government's regulation of six phthalates in children's products, bringing Canadian law in line with actions already taken in the US and the European Union. Indeed, even more regulation is necessary to control phthalate exposures that continue to create health risks for children, including via prenatal exposure of pregnant women.

Phthalates are used in many different consumer products. They are in many fragranced products and as plasticizers, they soften hard vinyl. Manufacturers of soft plastic children's products have voluntarily stopped using some phthalates for several years. This regulation will ensure that voluntary action continues and that it extends to all six phthalates subject to this regulation.

However, many other soft vinyl products and other uses of phthalates, including in cosmetics and cleaning products are not addressed in this regulation. "Scientific evidence shows that many other sources contribute to ongoing phthalate exposure," noted Kathleen Cooper, Senior Researcher with CELA. Although not persistent substances, the constant exposure to phthalates from multiple sources creates a kind of quasi-persistence. Human biomonitoring studies consistently show that children are more highly exposed.

We know that exposure to phthalates occurs in the air and dust inside our homes as well as in some foods. The behaviour of young children – crawling on the floor, hand-to-mouth exploration – results in higher exposure. Children are also more vulnerable to toxic effects.

Scientific evidence shows that phthalates can disrupt the endocrine system in several ways. Laboratory studies in animals and some human epidemiological evidence shows associations with several impacts on the male reproductive system. Phthalates are associated with the "testicular dysgenesis syndrome" or TDS which includes two birth defects, cryptorchidism (undescended testicles) and hypospadias (a defect in the male urinary tract), reduced ano-genital distance, impaired semen quality in adulthood, and testicular cancer in young men. Phthalates are also associated with premature breast development in young girls and endometriosis in women.

"While this new regulation is most welcome in reducing some childhood exposures to phthalates, like the chemical bisphenol A, the scientific evidence indicates that prenatal exposure to pregnant women is a time of equal or greater vulnerability. More comprehensive controls on the use of phthalates and thereby reducing exposure to the population at large from other consumer products is warranted," Cooper noted.

#### **For more information, please contact:**

Kathleen Cooper, Senior Researcher, 705-341-2488

On-line: <http://www.cela.ca/collections/pollution/toxic-substances-consumer-products>