

STATE OF MARYLAND

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Shari T. Wilson, Secretary

BILL NO: SB 556

COMMITTEE: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

POSITION: Support

TITLE: Environment – Decabrominated Diphenyl Ether - Prohibitions

BILL ANALYSIS: This bill prohibits, after Dec. 31, 2010, the manufacturing, selling or distributing of mattresses, upholstered residential furniture, and electrical or electronic equipment that contains decabrominated diphenyl ether, a flame retardant containing bromine. The prohibition is extended to all products after Dec. 31, 2012 with certain exceptions, and those exceptions are removed after Dec. 31, 2013. Inventories may be sold, recycled or otherwise disposed.

POSITION AND RATIONALE: Support.

Support. Brominated flame retardants have increasingly been found in the environment including in Chesapeake Bay fish, and in human tissue. Although specific health thresholds have not been established, these compounds are sufficiently similar to other compounds with demonstrated health impacts and are both persistent and bioaccumulative, that caution is warranted. Two of three commonly used compounds have already been banned. The delay in banning the deca form was based largely on the concern that a less harmful alternative had not been identified. The State of Washington, after two years of study has identified resorcinol bis diphenyl phosphate (RDP) as a safer alternative, and noted that design changes such as inherently flame resistant fabrics can be used in many instances when the alternative compound is not applicable. Many companies have voluntarily found alternatives. After negotiations with EPA the three

major producers and importers of deca-BDE have agreed to end the production, importation, and sales of decaBDE for most uses in the United States by Dec. 31, 2012, and EPA is considering whether additional action is warranted.

FOR MORE INFORMATION,
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