

Ontario Public Health Association & The Government Committee on the Toxics Reduction Act

- Ontario Public Health Association (OPHA) commends the Ontario government for taking action to reduce exposure to toxic substances in order to improve the health of the public.
- The Toxics Reduction Act is a good first step.

Who we are

- The Ontario Public Health Association is a member-based volunteer non-profit organization that provides leadership on issues affecting the public's health and strengthens the impact of people who are active in public and community health throughout Ontario.
- Among our members are public health inspectors and environmental health specialists who implement the Health Hazards Prevention and Management program under the Health Protection and Promotion Act and the many public health professions implementing the Chronic Disease Prevention Program.
- We are a supporter of the Take Charge of Toxics campaign lead by the Canadian Cancer Society.

Why does this legislation matter to us?

- Our organization is very concerned about toxic substances in our air, water, land and consumer products.
- Some of these substances cause cancer, birth defects, asthma and other adverse health affects.
- Ontario ranks second only to Texas in the tons of toxic chemicals released and highest among the provinces in environmental carcinogen release.
- We believe that our citizen have a right to know what is in their products and their environment.

OPHA supports Bill 167 to reduce toxic substances in our environment

- This legislation will help protect human health by reducing exposure to toxic substances in our environment
- It requires industries to track, quantify and report on the toxic substances used and created in their facilities
- It informs Ontarians about toxic substances in their environment and requires industry disclosure
- It regulates the manufacturing, sale or distribution of toxic substances or consumer products that contain toxics
- It provides technical and financial assistance for smaller businesses and strengthens the green economy.

We would like to see the legislation strengthened in the following ways:

- Set targets for the reduction in use, creation and release of toxics – 50% in 5 years.
- Inform people of exposures in their environment and products.
- Address more substances, lower the thresholds and include more sectors.
- Require substitution when possible.
- Assist companies in finding alternatives.
- Develop a reporting system and monitor progress.

Set targets for the reduction in use, creation and release of toxics – 50% in 5 years


- The statute should include renewable reduction targets.
- Targets are necessary to stimulate reduction and regulate toxic use and release.
- Targets can spur innovation and allow benchmarks for measuring and monitoring progress.

Inform people of exposures in their environments and the products they use

- OPHA supports your commitment to inform the public with the posting of a summary of industries' toxic reduction plans.
- We recommend that the legislation require companies to also disclose their actual use, creation and release of toxic substances.
- All ingredients in consumer products should be disclosed on product labels and if cancer causing, the product should display a hazard symbol.

Address more substances, lower the thresholds and include more sectors.


- The 45 substance identified represent only 14% of total number of substances currently subject to the NPRI, an already inadequate list of toxic substance that should be subject to reduction.
- The threshold for size of company covered by this legislation should be reduced from 10 to 5 employees.
- The threshold for quantities of toxic substances requiring reporting should also be reduced from the proposed 10,000 KG. Collectively, these facilities can contribute significantly to local emissions
- Include all sectors that use listed substances above the regulatory thresholds, not just those in manufacturing.



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Develop a Reporting System and Monitor Progress

- Industry needs to be held accountable to the public for its use, creation and release of toxic substances.
- Full disclosure to the public is important.



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Thank You

The Ontario Public Health Association would like to commend you on the legislation you have introduced and encourages you to strengthen it to protect the health of Ontarians.