



# LD 1568: An Act to Clarify Maine's Phase-out of Polybrominated Diphenyl Ethers (i.e. "DECA")

*Protect Maine people and wildlife*

*No one should have to worry about toxic chemicals in food and everyday products.*

## **DECA is a toxic flame retardant linked to learning disabilities and other serious health effects.**

- DECA is a persistent, bio-accumulative and toxic chemical (PBT), meaning that it's long-lived in the environment, builds up in the food chain and is toxic to humans and wildlife.
- DECA steadily migrates from the products to which it was added and builds up in the fat tissue of people and animals.<sup>1</sup> Children are particularly at risk.
- DECA delays brain development and causes adult learning and behavior problems in lab animals exposed early in life. In mice, DECA produced irreversible changes in brain function that worsened with age in adults.<sup>2</sup>

## **Maine lawmakers have already banned DECA and other dangerous brominated flame retardants from use in many consumer products.**

- In 2004, the Legislature banned two of these hazardous brominated flame retardants in all consumer products.
- In 2007, the legislature overwhelmingly voted to ban DECA from use in consumer electronics, furniture and mattresses – what was then thought to be the vast majority of the market for this toxic compound.



## **DECA manufacturers have now found another way to sell their dangerous product - in the plastic pallets used to ship and store a variety of products.**

- DECA manufacturers are now selling millions of pounds of DECA to the plastic pallet industry.
- It is estimated that more DECA could be used in plastic pallets than was ever used in electronics and furniture prior to the 2007 ban in several states and the European Union.



## **DECA is still DECA. It's an unstable chemical that will quickly leach into the food, air, and water nearby – ending up in humans and wildlife and leading to serious health effects.**

- DECA degrades into other brominated chemicals that are even more toxic and easily absorbed by humans and wildlife.<sup>3</sup>
- The levels of brominated chemicals in people's bodies are doubling every 2 to 5 years, and are 40 times higher in North America than on other continents.

## **It's time to close the DECA loopholes so we don't have to guess where this toxic chemical will turn up next.**

- The Maine Legislature needs to ban DECA from plastic pallets and all other consumer goods.
- Fortunately, there are effective flame retardants that are far safer and do not build up in people and animals and persist in the environment.

**Pass the DECA Loopholes Bill and protect Maine people and wildlife**

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## *Protect Maine people and wildlife*

### **LD 1568: An Act to Clarify Maine's Phase-out of Polybrominated Diphenyl Ethers is supported by the:**

### **Environmental Priorities Coalition**

We are 26 environmental, conservation, and public health organizations who have joined together for a sixth consecutive year around a Common Environmental Agenda. We represent over 100,000 members in Maine who want to protect good health, good jobs, and the quality of life that our environment provides for all of us.

#### **Coalition partners include:**

American Lung Association of New England  
Appalachian Mountain Club  
Atlantic Salmon Federation  
Bicycle Coalition of Maine  
Conservation Law Foundation  
Environmental Health Strategy Center  
Environment Maine  
Environment Northeast  
Friends of Casco Bay  
Maine Audubon  
Maine Center for Economic Policy  
Maine Congress of Lake Associations  
Maine Council of Churches  
Maine Council of Trout Unlimited  
Maine League of Conservation Voters  
Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association  
Maine People's Alliance  
Maine Rivers  
Natural Resources Council of Maine  
Northern Forest Alliance  
Physicians for Social Responsibility, Maine Chapter  
RESTORE: The North Woods  
Sierra Club, Maine Chapter  
The Ocean Conservancy  
The Wilderness Society  
Toxics Action Center

#### **References:**

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<sup>1</sup> RISING LEVELS: Maine Department of Environmental Protection, **Brominated Flame Retardants: Report to the Joint Standing Committee on Natural Resources, 122<sup>nd</sup> Legislature**, February 2005; w/ Maine Center for Disease Control & Prevention, February 2006.

<sup>2</sup> DECA TOXICITY: Cressey MA, Reeve EA, Rice DC, and Markowski VP, **Behavioral Impairments Produced by Developmental Exposure to the Flame Retardant decaBDE**, presented at the annual meeting of the Behavioral Toxicology Society, September 16-17, 2006.

<sup>3</sup> TOXIC BYPRODUCTS: Stapleton H, **Brominated Flame Retardants: Assessing DecaBDE Debromination in the Environment**, prepared for the EPHA-EN, May 2006. Heather Stapleton, PhD is an Environmental Chemist at Duke University.