



For Release: September 30, 2018

Contact: Sean MacNeil (916) 319-2050

Governor Signs Legislation to Protect Californians from Toxic Flame Retardant Chemicals

SACRAMENTO – Yesterday, Governor Jerry Brown signed AB 2998 into law, approving a statewide ban on specific household products that contain toxic flame retardant chemicals. The measure, which was introduced by Assemblymember Richard Bloom (D-Santa Monica), prohibits the sale of juvenile products, specified mattresses and mattress components, and upholstered or reupholstered furniture in California that contain unnecessary toxic flame retardant chemicals.

“Toxic flame retardant chemicals have put consumers, children, and firefighters at risk for decades. Today, we say *no more*,” said Assemblymember Bloom. “We know flame retardant chemicals are toxic and that they don’t improve the fire resistance of the products in this bill. There is no justifiable reason for manufacturers to continue using these chemicals and AB 2998 will ensure that they no longer do.”

Flame retardant chemicals have long been added to a variety of household products to meet now-defunct flammability standards. Today, these chemicals are ubiquitous in American households and have steadily built up in human bodies and in the environment. As a result, Americans have higher levels of these chemicals in their bodies than populations in many other developed countries.

Among the general public, children and firefighters have particularly high exposure risks. Infants are exposed to these chemicals at higher levels than adults, often coming into contact with them in dust or through breast milk. Studies have linked these chemicals to lower birth weight, reduced IQ, and impaired neurological development in children. Additionally, when flame retardant chemicals burn, they convert into dioxins and furans: toxic substances known to cause cancer. Firefighters inhale these chemicals in the process of fighting fires and over the past several decades, cancer rates have increased among firefighters in part due to the presence of these chemicals.

AB 2998 prohibits the sale of specific products – juvenile products, specified mattresses and mattress components, and upholstered or reupholstered furniture in California – that contain

toxic flame retardant chemicals. All of the products identified in the bill either have no flammability standard or a standard that can easily be met without the use of flame retardant chemicals.

In fact, much of the industry in all three segments, has moved away from the use of flame retardant chemicals, in part due labeling requirements and increased public awareness about their dangers. However, disclosure requirements have been insufficient to fully eliminate these chemicals and legislation is needed to protect all Californians from these chemicals.

“It has long been known that flame-retardant chemicals offer little added safety benefit, but exposure to smoke that carries these toxins substantially increases the risk our firefighters face from job-related cancer,” said Brian K. Rice, president of the California Professional Firefighters. “AB 2998 is a major step forward in the health and safety of our firefighters and our communities. We thank Governor Brown for signing this important measure into law.”

Richard Bloom represents California’s 50th Assembly District, which comprises the communities of Agoura Hills, Bel Air, Beverly Hills, Brentwood, Hollywood, Malibu, Pacific Palisades, Santa Monica, Topanga, West Hollywood, and West Los Angeles.