

California Legislation Introduced to Give Consumers the Right to Know What's in their Cleaning Products

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SACRAMENTO— The Environmental Working Group and the Breast Cancer Fund congratulate Assemblymember Reginald Byron Jones-Sawyer, Sr. (D-Los Angeles) for introducing much-needed legislation that would require manufacturers to disclose the ingredients in cleaning products commonly used by consumers and workers.

“Every day residents of this great state are exposed to chemicals commonly found in products used to clean and disinfect our homes, cars and offices. These chemicals linger and contaminate our urban and rural environments,” said Assemblymember Jones-Sawyer, Sr. “They have been linked to numerous health conditions that disproportionately affect low-wage workers, women, immigrants and people of color. These Californians are in contact with these products daily; as a result, they bear the brunt of long-term health risks. This is why it is so crucial that we have transparency in labeling so that consumers, workers and business owners can make informed decisions about the cleaning products they choose to purchase and use.”

“Mandatory ingredient labeling for food and personal care products allow consumers to know if there are allergens in their granola bars or formaldehyde releasers in their shampoo and make their buying choices accordingly. It is important that consumers also be given the power to make similar choices when it comes to cleaning products,” said Bill Allayaud, California director of government affairs for the EWG.

“Assemblymember Jones-Sawyer’s legislation acknowledges that consumer demand to know what’s in their products continues to skyrocket, and while manufacturers are more frequently voluntarily disclosing most of their ingredients, mandatory disclosure is needed,” he added.

“The unfortunate reality is that some cleaning products contain chemicals linked to allergies, asthma, reproductive harm and even cancer, including breast cancer,” said Nancy Buermeyer, senior policy strategist at the Breast Cancer Fund.

“Almost 90 percent of maids and housecleaners are women, and more than 60 percent are women of color. These workers have a high level of exposure to the hazardous chemicals in cleaning products and have the right to know what those chemicals are so they can take steps to protect themselves,” she added.

Just last year, the State of California Department of Public Health released a [report](#) that advised that the health of school children, teachers, and custodians could be jeopardized by some cleaning products.

Assembly Bill AB 708 would require ingredient disclosure on both product labels and Internet websites for most kinds of cleaning products sold to consumers and businesses. It would not require the concentrations of these ingredients to be disclosed. The bill is co-sponsored by the Environmental Working Group and the Breast Cancer Fund.

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The Breast Cancer Fund is the leading national organization working to prevent breast cancer by eliminating our exposures to toxic chemicals and radiation linked to the disease. Find out more at: <http://www.breastcancerfund.org>.

The Environmental Working Group is a non-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to protecting human health and the environment. Our mission is to empower people to live healthier lives in a healthier environment. EWG drives consumer choice and civic action with its game-changing investigations and research on toxics and environmental health, food and agriculture, and water and energy. Learn more at www.ewg.org.