



Legislation Summary:

An Act to protect children, families, and firefighters from harmful flame retardants

Initial bill number: [H1245](#) (Bill numbers will change as legislation proceeds.)

Sponsor: Rep. Marjorie Decker

This bill would prohibit the sale in Massachusetts of products containing certain specified flame retardants, primarily upholstered furniture and children's products.

For decades, toxic flame retardants have been used in upholstered furniture and other products to meet a California state standard for product flammability. Known as Technical Bulletin 117 (TB 117), this California standard became the de facto standard nationally. If you look at the tag under your couch cushion, chances are it will say "made to TB 117 standards."

These "flame retardants" are now linked to cancer, nervous system damage, decreased fertility, and other health problems and ironically, have also been shown to be ineffective at stopping fires. This fact was dramatically revealed by a 2012 Chicago Tribune investigative series that ultimately prompted a new California fire safety standard.

Alternative ways to make furniture and other products fire resistant without the use of toxic chemicals exist. California's new TB 117-2013 standard that went into effect Jan. 1, 2015, states that flame retardant chemicals are not required as long as flammability standards are met. Some companies, but not all, are making furniture without flame retardants in order to sell to the large California market. Manufacturers do not have to adhere to the new standard except in California, so the burden falls on the consumer to find chemical-free products.

Passage of H.1245, banning chlorinated Tris and other similar flame retardants, will ensure furniture and children's products sold in Massachusetts are free of these chemicals and make certain that upholstered furniture and other products containing these chemicals under the old TB 117 standard are not offered for sale in Massachusetts. With this ban, Massachusetts will join 13 other states which have opted for banning specific flame retardants in products.