



# *Building a State Campaign for Safer Alternatives to Toxic Chemicals*

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# *Objectives*

- *Describe components of a safer substitution coalition.*
- *Discuss integrating occupational/environmental objectives within a public health framework.*
- *Describe the components of an academic center to support safer substitution*
- *No conflict of interest*

# *Background*

- *Absence of effective chemical policy in US*
  - *Chemicals untested– EDF study*
  - *OSHA chemical standards for only 450 chemicals, most from 1972*
  - *TSCA mostly ineffective & not used*
  - *Few/weaker new standards under Bush*
  - *Chemical use not tracked/reported*
    - *Some info from TRI database, but limited*
    - *Restrictions on public access to data due to concerns with terrorism*
  - *Don't know, don't tell, don't control*

# *Emerging concerns about chemicals*

- *Endocrine disruption*
- *Chlorine-based compounds*
- *Body burden studies*
- *Specific compounds*
  - *Flame retardants*
  - *Bisphenal A*
  - *Fluorine-based compounds (e.g., Teflon)*
  - *Phthalates*

# *Beginning of solution: state-based policy initiatives*

- *Experiment with new approaches*
- *Build support for national policies*
- *Develop new approaches to coalition building*
- *SAFER coalition in 8 states: MA, ME, WA, CT, NY, MI, MN, CA*

# *Form a Broad Coalition*

## ■ **Public health**

- *CT Public Health Assn*
- *CT Assn. Public Health Nurses*
- *CT Assn. Directors of Health*

## ■ **Labor**

- *ConnectiCOSH*
- *CT AFL-CIO*
- *AFT 4200 (State Employees)*
- *AFSCME*
- *CEUI-SEIU*
- *IAM*
- *Hartford Central Labor Council*
- *Teamsters 559*

## ■ **Health care providers**

- *CT Nurses Association*
- *School Nurses*

## ■ **Environmental**

- *Clean Water Action*
- *CT Coalition for Environmental Justice*
- *CT Citizen Action Group*
- *CT Northeast Organic Farming Association*
- *Environment Connecticut*
- *Sierra Club Connecticut Chapter*
- *Toxics Action Center*
- *The Watershed Partnership*

## ■ **Health-affected groups**

- *ConnFESS (Connecticut Foundation for Environmentally Safe Schools)*
- *Ecological Health Organization (ECHO)*

## ■ **Academic**

- *UConn Occupational Health*
- *Yale Occupational Health*

# *Decentralized Staff*

- *Funding from John Merck and Beldon Foundations*
- *Full-time & part-time staff at Clean Water Action*
- *Part time staff at CPHA, CTCOSH, CNA, CCEJ, CCAG*
- *Advantages*
  - *Long-term integration of issue into organizations*
  - *Pull in members of organizations more effectively*
  - *More perspectives/contacts*
- *Disadvantages*
  - *More difficult to coordinate*
  - *Staff can get pulled into other organizational issues*
  - *More difficulties with hiring/organizational funding*

# *How is a Broad Coalition Helpful?*

- *Builds a strong, diverse base of citizens for advocacy: Leaders more likely to respond*
- *Wide variety of perspectives*
- *Deepens understanding of impacts on different constituencies*
- *Access to experts & stories for testimony and press events*
- *Wide web of contacts, resources & ideas*



# *Example: Pesticides in Schools*

- *One group took lead (Watershed Partnership) for technical issues, factsheets, examples of success*
- *Professional groups provided additional technical information*
- *Public health nurses include school nurses*
- *Unions represented affected parties, such as janitors/maintenance workers*
- *Many legislative contacts*

# *Example: Municipal Resolutions on Green Cleaning*

- *Municipal worker unions*
- *Local Central Labor Councils*
- *Directors of Health*
- *Identify town resident leaders from coalition partners*

## *Example: Toxic Flame Retardants (Polybrominated Diphenyl Ethers-PBDE)*

- *Opposition to bill from fire marshals (from other states) concerned about phasing out flame retardant who testified against bill*
- *CTCOSH included firefighters union*
  - *Concern about toxics in buildings during fires, so strongly support safer alternatives*
  - *Dialogue with sympathetic group about alternatives to PBDE*
  - *Can provide alternative views to legislature*

# *Framing the Issues*

- *Precautionary Principle – Be careful*
- *Substitution Principle – Substitute whenever possible*
- *Safer alternatives protect workers, consumers, and the environment*
- *Human health effects*
- *Children especially vulnerable*
- *Assist & motivate companies to move to safer alternatives*
  - *Technical resources*
  - *Legislation to create incentives and/or planning*
  - *Economic development opportunities: REACH law in EU requires safer products*
- *Ban or restrict known hazards: Require safer alternatives where feasible*

# *Legislative Initiatives/Proposals*

- *Safer grounds and safer cleaning in schools*
- *Strong implementation of Executive Order on cleaning chemicals, extend*
- *Restrict use of PBDE's*
- *Innovation Institute to assist in technical resources for safer alternatives*
- *Municipal resolutions on safer alternatives for local government*

# *Executive Order 14 (CT, 2006)*

- *“All state agencies in the executive branch shall procure and use, whenever practicable, cleaning and/or sanitizing products having properties that minimize potential impacts to human health and the environment, consistent with maintaining clean and sanitary State facilities.”*
- *Require contractors to use cleaning and/or sanitizing products that minimize potential impacts to human health and the environment, consistent with maintaining clean and sanitary facilities.*
- *Establish and publish written standards and guidelines to provide direction to all state agencies*
- *Municipal governments are encouraged to review their purchasing and use of cleaning products and/or sanitizing products and are hereby urged to comply with the provisions of this Executive Order where deemed appropriate.*

# *Municipal Resolutions-Sample*

- *The municipality/school district of (name), following Connecticut Executive Order No. 14, will make the transition to safer, environmentally preferable cleaning chemicals in all facilities. The (administrator) will create a “Safer Cleaning Taskforce” to:*
  - *Inventory of cleaning chemicals*
  - *Obtain Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) on all chemicals used or stored*
  - *Determine if safer alternatives are available for cleaning needs*
  - *Purchase safer, healthier cleaning products if cost is no more 120% of the cost of historically used products*
  - *Purchase non-asthmagens whenever possible*
  - *If cleaning products other than those listed on the preferable products list are used, staff using those products must provide a written report and oral presentation to the City Council each year by the anniversary of the effective date of this resolution, explaining why the use of the chemical or product was necessary, or, if cost was the reason for using the potentially damaging substance, document the difference in cost.*

# *“Innovation Institute”*

- *In development-- UConn*
- *Assist businesses to transition to safer alternatives*
- *Respond to EU REACH legislation*
- *Expand “Control Banding” model for both occupational and environmental risks*
- *Education, technical assistance*
- *Partner with Toxic Use Reduction Institute at UMass-Lowell*
- *Chemical policy analysis*

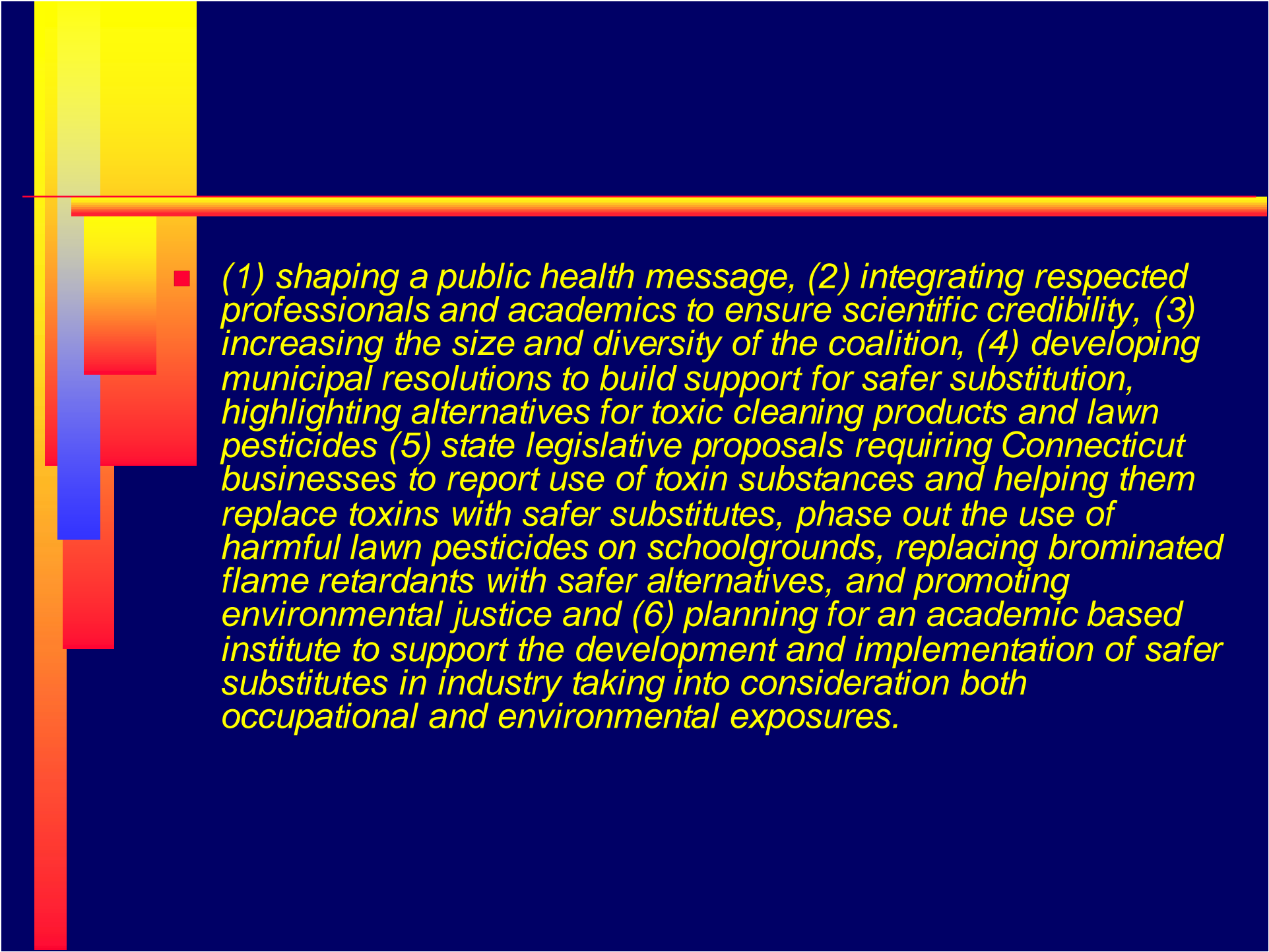


# *Chemical Policy Reform*

- *Shrinking Planet*
  - *REACH will restrict about 1,300 chemicals for import into EU*
  - *Globally Harmonized System will standardize risk phrases*
  - *Chemical testing will be expanded and standardized, data sharing*
- *What companies will be affected?*
  - *Need for survey or reporting*
- *What are main chemicals of concern in local economy to workers, employers, consumers?*
- *How create incentives for switching to safer alternatives?*

# Conclusions

- *Growing evidence that toxins in everyday products and the environment are damaging health, esp. fertility & children*
- *Precaution and Substitution are becoming the reality in Europe and other countries.*
- *U.S. will fall behind if our companies don't shift to safer alternatives*
- *States are leading the way in passing policy*
- *Broad, diverse coalitions focusing on policy change are key to moving the U.S. towards safer products and less hazardous manufacturing, safer workplaces, and healthier communities and environment.*

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- *(1) shaping a public health message, (2) integrating respected professionals and academics to ensure scientific credibility, (3) increasing the size and diversity of the coalition, (4) developing municipal resolutions to build support for safer substitution, highlighting alternatives for toxic cleaning products and lawn pesticides (5) state legislative proposals requiring Connecticut businesses to report use of toxin substances and helping them replace toxins with safer substitutes, phase out the use of harmful lawn pesticides on schoolgrounds, replacing brominated flame retardants with safer alternatives, and promoting environmental justice and (6) planning for an academic based institute to support the development and implementation of safer substitutes in industry taking into consideration both occupational and environmental exposures.*