



# The Safer Alternatives Bill

## An Act for a Healthy Massachusetts: Safer Alternatives to Toxic Chemicals

**Sponsors: Senator Steven Tolman and Representative Jay Kaufman**

### The goals

#### **PROTECT OUR HEALTH**

Scientific evidence increasingly indicates that a wide array of toxic chemicals we use in our everyday lives are contributing to an epidemic of chronic diseases and disorders, including asthma, birth defects, cancers, developmental disabilities, diabetes, endometriosis, infertility, Parkinson's disease, and others. Yet many of these toxic chemicals can be replaced with safer alternatives. The Safer Alternatives bill establishes a unique program to promote these alternatives, thereby protecting our health.

#### **DEVELOP A HEALTHY ECONOMY**

Choosing safer alternatives will not only help prevent widespread suffering, it will reduce the burden on our economy by averting high health care and special education costs as well as lost productivity. Innovative industries and green chemistry can create the safer products and sustainable jobs that are increasingly demanded in today's economy. The European Union and other countries have already adopted more health protective requirements for products, and over 37% of Massachusetts trade is with the European Union's member states. The Safer Alternatives program will assist Massachusetts businesses in competing in the global marketplace.

### What this bill does

#### **EXPANDS TURA**

This bill expands the successful Massachusetts Toxics Use Reduction Act (TURA) program, which has demonstrated that reducing the use of toxic chemicals both protects health and saves businesses money. It builds upon TURA's proven pragmatic approach to helping MA industries by creating a comprehensive program to replace toxic chemicals with safer alternatives in consumer products and other businesses. It provides technical and financial assistance to businesses to support implementation of safer alternatives. The program would address a few chemicals at a time, to demonstrate expertise and success at substitution of safer alternatives.

#### **CREATES A FLEXIBLE PRAGMATIC PROGRAM**

First an analysis is done to determine whether there are feasible safer alternatives for each general use of the toxic chemical, (i.e. a type of product or industrial use). Then there are flexible choices:

- **If there are feasible safer alternatives**, businesses develop their own substitution plans and can either a) certify they are using a safer alternative, b) propose a different safer alternative (subject to review) or c) apply for a waiver showing that there is no safer alternative that is technically or economically feasible for that use.
- **If there are not feasible safer alternatives**, state agencies create research and development plans, but do not take regulatory action on that product or use.

## COMPONENTS OF THE SAFER ALTERNATIVES PROGRAM

The Toxics Use Reduction Act (TURA) already has a highly successful system in place for assisting industrial users of large quantities of toxic chemicals to reduce their toxics use. Not only have TURA's programs been good for public health in the Commonwealth, but many of the businesses that have worked with the TURA programs have realized substantial cost savings. The Safer Alternatives bill preserves the existing programs of TURA and expands them to seek safer substitutes for toxic chemicals in consumer products and other sources. These programs would utilize the existing agencies established under TURA, the Office of Technical Assistance (OTA), the Toxics Use Reduction Institute at UMass Lowell (TURI) and the TURA Science Advisory Board.

For priority toxic chemicals, the steps to the substitution program would be:

1. For each use of the priority chemicals, TURI conducts a study to determine whether there are one or more feasible safer alternatives.
2. Chemical Action Plans, prepared by state agencies, establish state-wide priorities for substitution based on the exposure danger of each chemical and how easily the chemical can be replaced.
3. The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) sets deadlines by which companies must implement safer alternatives, based on state priorities. The deadlines will take into account the costs of the transition and the availability of assistance for substitution.
4. Businesses and other users make their own substitution plans and choices and can apply for waivers if safer alternatives are not technically or economically feasible.
5. The Business Transition Assistance Program helps businesses switch to the safer alternative. The program includes technical assistance, grants and loans, and research and development assistance. It is supported by funds raised through fees on toxic chemicals.

The Safer Alternatives program would thus combine technical and financial assistance to businesses to help them switch to safer alternatives, with flexible options for business innovation and implementation, and clear deadlines for action to create a level playing field for all businesses.

**Massachusetts can lead the way on technological innovation, globally competitive businesses, and the protection of workers, communities and consumers!**

**For more information contact the Alliance for a Healthy Tomorrow  
617-338-8131, [info@healthytomorrow.org](mailto:info@healthytomorrow.org)**

The Alliance for a  
**HEALTHY  
TOMORROW**

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### Safe Products Made Safely

*The Scientific, Economic and Common Sense Arguments for Passing the Safer Alternatives Bill*

**This is number ten in a series of ten fact sheets.**

To request copies of the other fact sheets or for more information, contact the Alliance for a Health Tomorrow, 617-338-8131, [info@healthytomorrow.org](mailto:info@healthytomorrow.org).

