

3rd Annual Town Hall Meeting
Translating Breast Cancer and Environmental Research into Action

SB484 and the California Nail Salon Collaborative's Efforts to Advance Worker Health and Safety in Nail and Beauty Salon Sectors in California

California State Senator Carole Migden
Senate District 3
Chair, Senate Labor & Industrial Relations Committee
Represented by Yvonne Beals
Senate District Representative

Yvonne Beals, Senate District Representative, provided an update on some of the legislation introduced by State Senator Carole Migden in the California State Senate.

In 2005, Senator Migden authored SB 484, which was sponsored by Breast Cancer Action and Breast Cancer Fund. The bill established the Safe Cosmetics Act, which requires manufacturers to disclose to the Division of Environmental and Occupational Disease Control any cosmetic product that contains any ingredient that is a chemical identified as causing cancer or reproductive toxicity. The bill was passed on September 7, 2005 and is currently being implemented.

One third of cosmetic products contain one or more known cancer-causing ingredients and are linked to birth defects and reproductive harm. Still, women continue to use them since this information is generally unknown to the public. Of particular concern to the Senator are three hazardous chemicals used in nail polishes, dibutyl phthalate or DBP, toluene, and formaldehyde. While this is of significance for the general population, this exposure is especially high for women working in beauty and nail salons. There are approximately 100,000 nail workers in the State of California and about 80,000 of them are young Vietnamese immigrants of reproductive age. These women are often unaware of the dangers to which they are being exposed.

Senator Migden has introduced SB 1712 and SB 1713 in order to eliminate environmental toxins found in children's products and women's cosmetics.

SB 1713, which Senator Migden co-authored with Senate President pro tem Don Perata, expands upon earlier legislation, AB 1108 authored by Assemblywoman Fiona Ma. In addition to Ma's ban on phthalates in children's products, SB 1713 enlarges that prohibition to include personal care products such as shampoos and lotions. SB 1713 also bans any detectable level of bisphenol A from all toys and children's care products.

A recent survey of 33 lipsticks conducted by the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics found that 20 of them contained detectable levels of lead, known to be a powerful neurotoxin. However, lead was not listed as an ingredient in any of these lipsticks, nor was it required to be. Women ingest a large amount of lipstick through its normal use and Beals emphasized that there is no safe level for lead in the human body. SB 1712 would

ban lead in lipstick.

Beals closed her update by thanking the audience for their advocacy and expressed special gratitude on the part of the Senator for the work of Julia Liou and the California Nail Salon Collaborative for their assistance in getting SB 484 passed and implemented. Beals encouraged audience members to pick up complimentary copies of "A Citizen's Guide to Lobbying" provided by Senator Migden in order to encourage the continuation of the advocacy that helps make these important changes possible.