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for the Boston City Council
Committee on Environment and Health
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My name is Ellie Goldberg. I am an advocate for healthy children, healthy schools and environmental health and safety. I am also a board member and Vice-president of Legislation for the Massachusetts PTA. I thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

Massachusetts PTA is part of the largest volunteer child advocacy organization in the United States. It is a not-for-profit organization of parents, educators, students, and other citizens active in their schools and communities. First organized in 1910, MassPTA now has approximately 19,000 members in 119 local units carrying on almost one hundred years of advocacy for children, families and schools.

PTA is a leader in reminding our nation of its obligations to children. The MassPTA position statement on *Safe and Nurturing Environments* dedicates us to *support, expand, and improve efforts to protect children from toxic exposures that cause preventable illnesses and disabilities.*

Just as MassPTA urges the passage of *An Act to Promote Safer Alternatives to Toxic Chemicals* as the safe choice and the smart choice for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, we urge the City of Boston to set a high standard for children's health and safety, public health and corporate accountability.

We know BPA is toxic and that it can sabotage children's healthy development. Indeed, our children are the hit and run victims of the thousands of health damaging and life altering "stealth" substances that are ubiquitous in our water, air and food and in the consumer products we use in our daily lives.

We see the evidence of harm with our own eyes... in our families, in our schools, in our communities, and in the daily newspapers. We need to stop the crisis of chronic disease and disability that leads to the rising health care and health insurance costs that are the budget busters of every family, school, business and municipality in the state. We cannot afford to wait for the federal system or for the marketplace to address the gaps in protection from toxic chemicals.

In the 1962 book *Silent Spring*, Rachel Carson (whose 101st birthday was this week) described the link between the contamination of the environment and our health. In Chapter 14: One in Four, Carson pointed out that the most dangerous type of exposure was the "minute exposures, repeated over and over throughout the years." Carson explained that unlike diseases and injuries caused by germs, we have put the vast majority of chemicals into the environment and, if we wish, we can eliminate many of them to lessen or mitigate their horrible impact. Her most basic legacy is the message that "*prevention is the imperative.*"

We need to always remember that the wealth of our communities is the health of our children. The public has the right to expect that our elected and appointed government officials at every level will act to safeguard the long term economic and health security of our families.

We cannot undo the contamination and continuous malignant exposures from BPA and other toxic chemicals already in our environment and in our bodies. But we can stop it from getting worse.

- We can adopt standards that stop the manufacture, distribution and sale of children's products and all food and beverage containers that contain BPA and other known hormone disrupters, carcinogens, and neurotoxins.
- We can align the use of public funds by our agencies, schools, grantees and contractors with standards and regulations that protect and safeguard children and public health by establishing "purchasing preferences" to allow only the purchase and use of products made without hormone disrupters, carcinogens, and neurotoxins.
- We can eliminate unnecessary hazardous products from our homes, schools, hospitals and workplaces.

PTA membership is open to anyone who is concerned with the education, health, and welfare of children and youth. We urge all health and education professionals, organizations, parent groups, citizens and City of Boston leaders and policy makers to be our partners in prevention. Together we can make wise policies and make sustainability, public health and good government a priority.

I encourage you to join PTA in working for the education, health and safety of your children and mine.

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