

Assembly Bill 1575

Professional Cosmetics Ingredients Listing

Assembly Member Ash Kalra

SUMMARY

AB 1575 would require manufacturers to list all ingredients on the labels of professional cosmetic products. The bill would establish labeling parity along with retail cosmetic products to indicate potential hazards and provide open information for consumers and professional workers. Specifically, products that contain one or more chemicals from the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) Candidate Chemical list would direct consumers to the website for more information on its potential harms.

AB 1575 also strengthens enforcement by the Department of Public Health to ensure manufacturers are in compliance and not mislabeling products.

BACKGROUND

Cosmetic products fall into two categories: retail and professional. While *retail* cosmetic manufacturers are required to label all ingredients for transparency to consumers, *professional* cosmetic products—marketed to salon owners and used by professionals—are not.

The initiative to label all retail cosmetic products ensures that consumers have access to the names of the chemicals they apply to their hair, skin, and nails. This transparency serves to inform consumers and allow the public at large to become more aware of and conduct research on potential hazardous chemicals and compounds.

For professional cosmetic products, business owners bear the responsibility of selecting professional-grade products that are not only safe for consumers, but for their employees who handle the products. Without knowing the ingredients, salon owners can only gauge the hazards based on Safety Data Sheets provided the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) that list

the *known* hazards. Unknown or even likely hazardous chemicals, which are documented on the DTSC Candidate Chemical lists, are not indicated anywhere.

The professional beauty salon industry is employed by mostly women, often immigrants or who are of color. On a daily basis and for long hours, salon professionals must handle solvents, glues, polishes, straighteners, and other beauty care products containing a multitude of chemicals.

Beauty salon professionals are increasingly reporting acute health concerns such as headaches, dizziness, rashes and breathing difficulties in addition to more serious health conditions such as miscarriages, birth defects, cancers and respiratory illnesses.

In nail salons, most professionals are of reproductive age and are often Vietnamese immigrants with limited English skills. Exposures to harmful chemicals among this group are exacerbated by difficulty in accessing information about harmful chemicals and how to prevent exposures.

Top health concerns faced by hair care professionals include irritation (skin, eye, nose), fatigue, nausea, pain (wrists, fingers, hands), and chemical burns. Reproductive problems faced by hair dressers include increased risk of infertility and spontaneous abortions as compared to other professionals. A 2011 survey of parental occupational exposure to endocrine disrupting chemicals found that women who had been in cosmetology school during pregnancy had twice the risk of miscarriage.¹ These concerns are particularly

¹ Parental occupational exposure to endocrine disrupting chemicals and male genital malformations: A study in the Danish national birth cohort study. *Environmental Health*. Vol. 10, No. 3, pp:1-9. 2011. Accessible at: www.ehjournal.net/content/10/1/3

acute among hair care professionals in African American communities due to more chronic diseases and less access to treatment.

There are over 80,000 chemicals in commercial use in the United States with approximately 10,000 chemicals used in cosmetic products. Some of the most hazardous chemicals found in professional beauty salon products include:

- Dibutyl phthalate (reproductive toxicant)
- Formaldehyde (carcinogenic)
- Toluene (neurological and developmental toxicant)
- Sodium hydroxide/lye (corrosive)

Some nail polish manufacturers are making comparably priced polishes without any of the “Toxic Trio” (DBP, formaldehyde, and toluene). However, there have been instances where manufacturers have inappropriately labelled nail polishes and hair straighteners as free of the “Toxic Trio,” even though one or more of those ingredients were in the product. By enforcing the disclosure of all ingredients, consumers can verify individual ingredients apart from the ambiguities of misleading marketing.

Due to such vagueness in labeling known toxicants and the lack of labeling for other chemicals of unknown nature, there is an urgent need for transparency in the professional cosmetic industry.

SOLUTION

AB 1575 elevates the labeling standard of professional cosmetic products to that of retail cosmetic products. Addressing the extended use of professional products by workers, this bill also notes any chemicals listed on the DTSC Candidate Chemical list to promote awareness, preventative practices, and further research.

AB 1575 improves enforcement by increasing penalties for failure to comply with the law and provides for state agencies to recoup the cost when pursuing actions against violators.

By requiring manufacturers to list ingredients on the labels of all professional cosmetic products,

individuals and the beauty salon industry can take steps to avoid or limit exposure to hazardous chemicals. Such actions can lead to improved working environments and prevent the prevalence of adverse health impacts associated with these hazardous chemicals.

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CONTACT

Liza Chu, Legislative Aide
Liza.chu@asm.ca.gov
(916) 319-2027