

Testimony of Urvashi Rangan, Ph.D.
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for the
Oregon State Legislature
Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee
SB 695
Position: FAVORABLE
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Consumers Union, the non-profit publisher of *Consumer Reports*®, magazine¹, writes in support of SB 695, prohibiting the manufacturing, distributing, selling or offering for sale a child's beverage container, container of infant formula or reusable bottle made or lined with bisphenol A or replacement material that is carcinogenic or is a reproductive toxicant in the state of Oregon. In addition, we support prohibiting the manufacturing, distributing, selling or offering for sale of metal cans made or lined with bisphenol A that contains food unless a label is affixed advising that can is made or lined with bisphenol A.

BPA has been used for years in clear plastic bottles and food-can liners. The chemical has potential links to an array of human health problems, including diabetes, heart disease, cancers, infertility, obesity, sexual problems, and neurological disorders. A 2007 Centers for Disease Control study showed that 93 percent of Americans have BPA in their urine. Another study suggests that BPA stays in the body longer than previously believed. Babies and young children may be particularly vulnerable because they may metabolize BPA more slowly than adults. Consumers Union has a long history on BPA. We were one of the first organizations to test consumer products for BPA and published our findings on BPA in baby bottles a decade ago, where we warned consumers then about the potential risks.² In recent years, we have tested canned goods for BPA, as well as the “BPA-free” claims on bottles³ and have also published

¹ Consumers Union of United States, Inc., publisher of *Consumer Reports*®, is a nonprofit membership organization chartered in 1936 to provide consumers with information, education, and counsel about goods, services, health and personal finance. Consumers Union’s publications and services have a combined paid circulation of approximately 8.3 million. These publications regularly carry articles on Consumers Union’s own product testing; on health, product safety, and marketplace economics; and on legislative, judicial, and regulatory actions that affect consumer welfare. Consumers Union’s income is solely derived from the sale of *Consumer Reports*®, its other publications and services, fees, noncommercial contributions and grants. Consumers Union’s publications and services carry no outside advertising and receive no commercial support.

² Consumers Union. Baby alert: New findings about plastics. *Consumer Reports*, 1999.

³ <http://www.consumerreports.org/cro/consumer-protection/recalls-and-safety-alerts-10-08/update-on-bisphenol-a/recalls-update-on-bisphenol-a.htm>

advice on how consumers can reduce their direct exposure to BPA.⁴⁵ We have also supported legislation proposed at the state and federal levels to ban BPA from children's products and food and beverage containers.⁶ In fact, Consumers Union believes that BPA should not be used in any food contact substances and has made that position clear in our reporting and testimony to the FDA.

Consumer Reports published in its December 2009 issue the results of our tests of BPA in canned foods. Our tests, which included canned foods such as soups, juice, tuna, and green beans, as well as infant formula, found that almost all of the 19 name-brand foods tested contain measurable levels of BPA. Our findings show that BPA levels varied widely and additional studies support an even wider range of BPA found in canned foods, even within the same product among different lots. It was also found in a diverse assortment of canned foods including those labeled “organic,” and even in some foods packaged in “BPA-free” cans.⁷

SB695 appropriately seeks to ban the chemical in the kinds of products – child beverage container, infant formula, and reusable containers- that hold foods and beverages consumed by children. Furthermore we support the labeling of metal cans made or lined with bisphenol A to be appropriately labeled as containing bisphenol A. These provisions ensure that all consumers can make informed purchasing decisions for themselves and their families. We therefore urge its passage. Again, we thank you very much for the opportunity to offer our testimony in support of this important legislation.

⁴ Rangan, Urvashi. Plastic worries: What you need to know to keep your family safe. *Consumer Reports'* Shopsmart, 2008.

⁵ <http://blogs.consumerreports.org/baby/2008/03/qa-baby-bottles.html>

⁶ Consumers Union et al. Written testimony to Senate hearing on Phthalates and BPA, 2008.

⁷ *Consumer Reports'* tests convey a snapshot of the marketplace and do not provide a general conclusion about the levels of BPA in any particular brand or type of product tested. Levels in the same product purchased at different types or places or in other brands of similar foods might differ from *Consumer Reports'* test results.