



Testimony of Ami V. Gadhia  
Policy Counsel, Consumers Union  
In Support of HB 33  
February 2, 2010

Chairman Hammen and members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee, my name is Ami Gadhia. I am Policy Counsel with Consumers Union's Washington, D.C. office. Consumers Union is the non-profit publisher of *Consumer Reports*<sup>®</sup>, magazine.<sup>1</sup> We appreciate the opportunity to testify in support of HB 33, a bill banning bisphenol-A (BPA) in child care articles and toys.

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. And a recent 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.<sup>2</sup> We recently tested canned goods for BPA, as well as the "BPA-free" claims on bottles<sup>3</sup> and have also published advice on how consumers can reduce their direct exposure to BPA.<sup>4,5,6</sup> We have also supported legislation proposed at the state and federal levels to ban BPA from children's products and food and beverage containers.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Consumers Union of United States, Inc., publisher of Consumer Reports<sup>®</sup>, 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<sup>®</sup>, 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.

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

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

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

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

<sup>6</sup> <http://blogs.consumerreports.org/baby/2008/03/qa-baby-bottles.html>

<sup>7</sup> Consumers Union et al. Written testimony to Senate hearing on Phthalates and BPA, 2008.

Most recently, *Consumer Reports* published in its December 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 can be found in a diverse assortment of canned foods including those labeled “organic,” and even in some foods packaged in “BPA-free” cans.<sup>8</sup>

HB 33 appropriately seeks to ban the chemical in the kinds of products – child care articles and toys – that pose a concern about the amount of BPA to which babies and children are exposed, either through feeding, teething, or other mouthing activities. We therefore urge its passage. Again, we thank you very much for the opportunity to testify in support of this important legislation.

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<sup>8</sup> *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.