



The Household Products Labeling Act

S.1697, Sen. Al Franken (D- MN)

H.R. 3057, Rep. Steve Israel (D – NY)

What does it do?

The **Household Products Labeling Act of 2009** requires household cleaning products to bear a label that includes a full list of ingredients in the product.

Why is this bill necessary?

Currently, manufacturers of cleaning products are not legally required to disclose all the ingredients in their products which makes it very difficult for consumers to know which chemicals they are being exposed to when they use these types of products. Some of the chemicals used in these products are potentially hazardous. It is clear that consumers using cleaning products can be exposed to the chemicals they contain, either through absorption through the skin, or inhalation. Studies have linked common chemicals used in household cleaners to asthma, reproductive problems, allergies and other various health impacts. Full disclosure of ingredients is necessary to allow consumers to prevent exposure to chemicals they wish to avoid. For more information about health hazards associated with exposure to chemicals in cleaning products visit www.womenandenvironment.org.

What sorts of household products are affected by this bill?

The bill specifically applies to: household cleaning products, air fresheners, deodorizers, floor polish, furniture polish, dishwashing soap, drain cleaners, laundry detergent, dryer sheets, epoxies, paints and stains. The bill also allows for any other similar consumer product to be designated by the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

Won't this list of chemical ingredients be confusing to consumers?

Both food and cosmetic products are already required to list ingredients on their labels. Consumers are well- acquainted with reading chemical-sounding ingredients on a package that they may or may not recognize and understand. There is no reason that including this information on cleaning products would be a different or more confusing experience for consumers.

Is disclosure of ingredients in dyes, fragrances and preservatives included? Why is that important?

Yes, S. 1697 specifically requires that components of fragrances, dyes and preservatives be included in the list of ingredients. This goes beyond the current labeling requirements for food and cosmetics, in which fragrances, dyes, and flavorings can simply be listed as categories.

Disclosure of components of fragrances, dyes and preservatives is important because these substances can each contain a multitude of individual chemicals, some of which can be potentially hazardous. Consumers have a right to know all of the chemicals in the products they use every day.

The Household Product Labeling Act is supported by the Women's Voices for the Earth, Consumers Union, the Consumer Federation of America, Preventing Harm Minnesota, and the Breast Cancer Fund.

For more information, contact Jamie Silberberger, director of programs and policy, Women's Voices for the Earth, 406.543.3747, jamie@womenandenvironment.org