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May 12, 2008

Assemblyman Mike Feuer
State Capitol, Room 4005
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Assembly Bill 1879
CHI Position: Oppose

Dear Assemblyman Feuer:

On behalf of the California Healthcare Institute (CHI), whose more than 250 members include our state's premier life sciences companies and academic research institutions, I am writing to indicate our opposition to AB 1879, legislation that would authorize the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) to regulate or restrict the sale of products containing or manufactured with specified chemicals as outlined in the bill. California is the worldwide headquarters for biomedical research and development. More than 2,500 biomedical companies and 87 public and private research institutions are devoted to solving major unmet medical needs such as cardiovascular and respiratory disease, cancer, diabetes, AIDS/HIV and other infectious diseases.

Several of the chemicals listed, including phthalates and lead, are critical components in the production of life-saving biomedical products. While alternatives may exist for certain uses of the chemicals listed, suitable substitutes are not available for many of the biomedical industry's applications – blood bags, IV lines, catheters, tubing, blister packs, etc. In every case, the use of the targeted chemicals has undergone a stringent federal approval process, whereby a comprehensive risk analysis has determined the product to be safe for patient exposure and for workers involved in the manufacturing process. It should be noted that California's biomedical industry is highly regarded as one of the "greenest" industries in the state, composed of companies and academic institutions that are renowned for their chemical use and disposal methods. Our members continue to look for alternatives to certain chemicals in your legislation, however this process takes time and because of the strict product approval process cannot be made instantly.

CHI believes that this legislation is premature in light of the work being done at the DTSC on its "Green Chemistry Initiative." The department continues to gather and analyze information on chemical use from numerous public and private stakeholders around the state. CHI has become increasingly active in this dialogue, meeting with the director of DTSC and facilitating the distribution of information from our membership.

WWW.CHI.ORG

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It is our understanding that the department is weeks away from unveiling its preliminary policy recommendation, and it would be inappropriate to advance statutory changes in this arena prior to the conclusion of that process.

CHI and our members are committed to the promotion and use of environmentally responsible materials. However, this needs to be balanced with the continued production of life-saving technologies that are improving the lives of patients around the world. Because of the reasons above, we respectfully oppose this legislation. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns at (916) 233-3497 or pizarro@chi.org to discuss further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sandra Pizarro". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Sandra Pizarro
Vice President, State Government Affairs

cc: Members, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Steve Archibald, Consultant, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus