

LDA

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To the Editor:

The Schenectady County Legislature is deliberating legislation to ban Bisphenol A (BPA) a harmful chemical, from certain baby products. Several municipalities and two states recently implemented similar bans for a simple reason; BPA is harmful, even in very small quantities, to developing babies and children. Now Congress and Senator Schumer are considering national legislation.

Contrary to recent statements made in this paper and at the recent county hearing, evidence is growing about the harmful effects of BPA. This is why six baby bottle manufacturers have voluntarily agreed to stop using BPA, and one maker of BPA itself no longer allows its use for infant products. It is an unfortunate fact that other representatives of this industry, like the tobacco, asbestos and other less scrupulous lobbyists before them, have pressed very hard to assure the safety of BPA. One of their major arguments in this debate is that federal regulators affirmed the safety of BPA. Thanks to investigative journalism from the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, we now know that the FDA relied on industry representatives to do their assessment work for them, and had an unusually close relationship with these individuals. No such relationship emerged between the FDA and environmental safety groups.

In the past 50 years, an estimated 80,000 chemicals were introduced into commerce. Sadly, no effective public authority assures that these chemicals are safe. Corresponding with this rise in chemical use are astounding increases in learning and other developmental disabilities such as autism. Cancers, asthma and other illnesses linked with chemicals in our environment have also increased dramatically. This is why the Learning Disabilities Association of New York State, along with breast cancer advocates and many other health and environmental organizations, urge government to adopt new, effective policy to regulate chemicals. Meanwhile, local leadership must address these critical safety issues. As a 20-year Schenectady resident, I urge that the full Legislature enact this bill soon.

Sincerely,

Stephen Boese
Executive Director