

## Toxins bill moving forward at State House

[E-mail this page](#) [Reader Comments \(below\)](#)

By [John Richardson](#) Portland Press Herald Staff Reporter March 11, 2008

AUGUSTA — A bill that would create a tracking system for toxic chemicals in household products could reach the state House of Representatives late next week.

The Natural Resources Committee voted 7-3 Monday afternoon to support a proposal that combines bills submitted by Gov. John Baldacci and House Majority Leader Hannah Pingree, D-North Haven. Members are expected to review final changes in the bill late this week.

The bill endorsed by committee members would authorize the Department of Environmental Protection to create a list of priority chemicals that are believed to pose a public health threat. Manufacturers would be required to notify the DEP if they use the listed chemicals in consumer products sold in Maine.

Under the bill, the agency could seek approval from an oversight board and the Legislature to ban the use of chemicals when alternatives are available and effective.

The bill is based on growing consumer concerns about lead and other chemicals in children's products and household items.

On Tuesday, a scientist with the BioDiversity Research Institute in Gorham presented the Natural Resources Committee with [new findings](#) that industrial and household chemicals are presents in wild bird eggs collected from all over the state. The study included eggs from 23 species, including eagles, loons, puffins, gulls and red-winged blackbirds.

Advocates of the toxin tracking bill said the fact that contaminants are pervasive in the food chain underscore the threat to human health.

Opponents of the bill, including a group of chemical manufacturers, have argued that federal rules already safeguard consumers and that chemicals are not necessarily causing harm when present at low levels.