

HCR 235

HD2



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Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator J. Kalani English, Vice Chair
Committee on Energy and Environment
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 225
Honolulu, HI 96813

**RE: HCR235 HD2 SUPPORTING THE PHASE OUT OF PRODUCTION AND IMPORTATION OF
DECABROMODIPHENYL ETHER IN THE UNITED STATES.**

Dear Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair English and Members of the Committee:

We are respectfully asking for passage of this resolution because it involves the happy case of an industry coming forward, on its own, and phasing this chemical out. It is the industry itself that is calling for an end to the production of Decabromodiphenyl ether.

The use of Decabromodiphenyl ether in electronics, wire and cable insulation, textiles, automobiles, trains, airplanes, and in other devices, was once thought to be entirely positive. This fire retardant has saved millions of lives. However, a few years ago, it was discovered that in the event that a fire occurs anyway, if the fire causes a high enough temperature, (about 1150 degrees Fahrenheit) the retardant can then emit chemicals into the air that may cause cancer. For years there was no reasonable alternative to DECA, and there needed to be a tradeoff between the possibility of a fire, and the possibility of getting cancer from that fire, if it occurred, and if the fire was hot enough.

But better solutions are now available, and the industry and the Federal government have agreed that the production, importation and sales of most Deca products will be phased out by the end of 2012, and all uses of these products will end in the United States by the end of 2013.

In the meantime the two U.S. producers of Deca, Albermarle Corporation and Chemtura Corporation, and the largest U.S. importer, ICL Industrial Products, have led the efforts to end production and use while at the same time having been vilified in some quarters for not ending such use faster. It is important to recognize too, that the International Fire Fighters Association has played a leading role in working with the industry to find better solutions to the problems inherent in producing better firesafe chemicals.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written comments.

Sincerely,
John H. Radcliffe
Vice President