



Massachusetts Association for the Chemically Injured, Inc.

P.O. Box 754, Andover, MA 01810 Phone: (978) 681-5117
Fax: (978) 686-0745 macimcs@aol.com www.maci-mcs.org

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RE: The Massachusetts Association for the Chemically Injured supports New Hampshire HOUSE BILL 1544 "AN ACT prohibiting the use of scented products in public areas of state buildings"

Dear Chair Layan and members of the Executive Departments and Administration Committee,

As President of the Massachusetts Association for the Chemically Injured I am writing to express our organization's support of New Hampshire HOUSE BILL 1544 "AN ACT prohibiting the use of scented products in public areas of state buildings" scheduled for a public Hearing, January 28, 2026 before your committee. I commend Representatives Prout, Wheeler, Seaworth, Flanagan, and A. Murray for bringing this bill forward for consideration by the New Hampshire legislature and to move this important access issue forward for a growing number of the public. Paying attention to how the public areas of your buildings are maintained through establishing a policy of fragrance-free cleaning products and prohibiting the use of fragrance dispensing devices will significantly improve the indoor air quality in the public areas of buildings owned and operated by the state for all who enter your facilities. Such a state policy will provide greater public access, reduce the potential health effects from the VOCs in scented products, and reduce reactions and illness especially for those most vulnerable to scented product exposure.

The Massachusetts Association for the Chemically Injured (MACI) is a non-profit statewide support, education, and referral organization for people with multiple chemical sensitivity (MCS) and those who care about the prevention of chemical injuries. MACI was founded in 1994 to assist those who suffer with multiple chemical sensitivity (MCS), a condition in which a person develops greatly increased sensitivity to chemicals and other irritants. Reactions to environmental exposures can affect many organ systems and result in multiple symptoms. Findings of several population surveys indicate that while MCS appears to afflict 4% to 6% of the population, 15% to 30% of the general population perceive themselves as "especially" or "unusually" sensitive to common everyday chemicals. Many of the calls that our organization receives pertain to issues involving access to facilities and the chemical barriers faced by the callers in his/her living with this "invisible" disability. Scented product use in public buildings are a major barrier to access. Dr. Steinemann reported from a nationally representative population survey that "Overall, 34.7% of the population reported health problems such as migraine headaches and respiratory difficulties, when exposed to fragranced products." and that "20.2 % would enter a business but leave as quickly as possible if they smell air fresheners or some fragranced product."

While our organization is incorporated in Massachusetts we are a neighboring state to New Hampshire and have members who presently live in New Hampshire, or have a second home in New Hampshire, and/or travel to New Hampshire for its many recreational offerings available to the public. Enacting this bill and establishing a policy prohibiting the use of scented products in public areas of state buildings is taking a positive action encouraged and promoted by the American Medical Association for government agencies.

Anne Steinemann, Ph.D. an international recognized scientist, [mentioned and quoted from above] has conducted, analyzed, and published studies on fragranced consumer products, the indoor built environments, health and societal effects from exposure to fragranced consumer products, to name a few. In her paper *Fragranced consumer products: exposures and effects from emissions* (<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11869-016-0442-z?fromPaywallRec=false>) Dr. Steinemann noted:

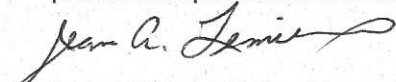
- “Fragranced products emit a range of volatile organic compounds (VOCs), such as terpenes (e.g., limonene) which often dominate pollutants found indoors, and generate secondary pollutants such as formaldehyde”.
- “Fragranced products have been associated with a range of adverse health effects, such as migraine headaches, asthma attacks, respiratory difficulties, neurological problems, mucosal symptoms, and contact dermatitis”.
- In two previous national surveys of the US population, 19% reported breathing difficulties, headaches, or other health problems when exposed to air fresheners and deodorizers, ...”

The scientific evidence continues to accumulate showing an association that toxic chemicals can affect one’s health and pointing a link that such environmental exposures are contributing to chronic illness. As the scientific evidence accumulates our environmental and health policies are outdated and do not protect us. Recently the American Medical Association’s Council on Science and Public Health reviewed the growing scientific evidence and the Association adopted a fragrance policy which encouraged the implementation of flexible fragrance-free policies.

HB 1544 is a step in the right direction as encouraged by the AMA recommendations for government agencies and is consistent with U.S. Access Board Indoor Environmental Quality (IEQ) Project Report and recommendations. <https://www.access-board.gov/research/building/indoor-environmental-quality/> Page 5 of the Project Report, Operations and Maintenance, Barriers and Issues Fragrances: the Report states “The presence of perfume, cologne, scented cleaners and other scented products contributes to poor indoor air quality and is one of the major access barriers for people with asthma and multiple chemical sensitivities.” It continues on page 6 with: “Exposure to fragrances can trigger asthma attacks and migraine headaches, and aggravate sinus conditions. In those who are chemically sensitive, fragrance exposures can also cause irregular heartbeat, memory loss, confusion, fatigue, and neurological, vascular, and other problems. In addition, some fragrance chemicals are implicated in causing cancer and/or damaging the liver, kidneys, and central nervous system. Fragrance chemicals can enter the body via inhalation, skin absorption, or nasal passageways.”

The Massachusetts Association for the Chemically Injured believes that passage of HB 1544 will significantly set into place regulations that will lead to improved indoor air quality in public buildings owned and operated by the State of New Hampshire. It will ensure greater access by the public and reduce health effects and illness by those who frequent these environments.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment in support of HB1544, AN Act prohibiting the use of scented products in public areas of state buildings.


Jean A. Lemieux, President

References:

American Medical Association. Fragrance Regulation H-135.902, Policy (2025). <https://policysearch.ama-assn.org/policyfinder/detail/fragrance?uri=%2FAMADoc%2FHOD.xml-H-135.902.xml>

Indoor Environmental Quality (IEQ) Report, United States Access Board, 2004 Steering Committee on IEQ Project, NIBS Report date 2006. [Recommended building policies, chapters on operation and maintenance and cleaner air spaces] <https://www.access-board.gov/research/building/indoor-environmental-quality/>

Steinemann, Anne, Ph. D., *Fragranced consumer products: exposures and effects from emissions*. Air Qual Atmos Health, 2016; 9(8):861-866. DOI 10.1007/s11869-016-0442-z. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11869-016-0442-z?fromPaywallRec=false>