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March 12, 2012

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Ron Chapman, MD, MPH
CA Department of Public Health
1615 Capitol Avenue, Suite 73.770
PO Box 997377, MS 0500
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Re: Assembly Bill 2197 (Mitchell) Seating furniture: flammability.

Dear Dr. Chapman:

On March 1, 2012 the California Conference of Local Health Officers (CCLHO) voted at the CCLHO Board meeting to support AB 2197 (Mitchell). Existing law, the Home Furnishings and Thermal Insulation Act, requires all seating furniture sold or offered for sale, to be fire retardant and labeled as such. This bill would require testing of upholstered furniture by an open flame test and a smolder test to replace the current requirement that furniture be fire retardant and thus infused with chemicals of concern.

Health Officers believe that toxic flame retardants used in our furniture to meet current standards do not reduce fire deaths and are a major threat to the public's health. Children and infants are most vulnerable to the harmful effects of these chemicals, and there is no excuse for requiring them in furniture and baby products.

AB 2197 is strongly supported by a large coalition of firefighters, scientists, businesses, consumers, and public health advocates. The new standard in AB 2197 will provide increased fire safety without the use of toxic and untested chemicals.

As you are aware, CCLHO was established in statute in 1947 to advise the California Department of Health Services (now the California Department of Public Health), other departments, boards, and commissions, as well as officials of federal, state and local agencies, the Legislature and other organizations on all matters affecting health. CCLHO membership consists of all legally appointed physician health officers in California's 61 city and county jurisdictions.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have questions, please feel free to contact me at wilma.wooten@sdcounty.ca.gov or 619-542-4181.

Sincerely,

Original Signed By:

Wilma Wooten, MD, MPH
President, California Conference of Local Health Officers