



## **The Balloon Council reports...**

### **Autumn 2000 Quarterly Report**

#### **BALLOON RELATED LEGISLATION:**

##### **Massachusetts**

Legislation that would ban the manufacture and sale of balloons that do not biodegrade within 60 days (House Bill 2948) was introduced by Representative DiMasi (D).

- This bill was placed under “study”, which means that it will not be released for a vote by the full House. However, the committee could use results of the study to justify future consideration of the bill.
- The legislative session ended in July, with no movement on the bill. It is likely that the sponsor will reintroduce the bill in the next session, as he has for the past several years. However, it is unlikely that there will be any movement, given the bill’s history.

Legislation that would prohibit the release of 10 or more balloons (House Bill 482) was introduced by Representative Kujawski (D).

- This bill was also placed under study, and will not be released for a vote by the full House.
- The legislative session ended, with no movement on the bill. It may be reintroduced in the next legislative session, which begins on January 3, 2001.

##### **New Jersey**

Legislation that would authorize municipalities to prohibit the release of 5 or more

balloons into the environment during a 24-hour period (Senate Bill 1122) was introduced by Senator Connors (R-9) and Senator Bark (R-8).

- This bill was referred to the Senate Environment Committee, but has not received committee consideration.
- The New Jersey Legislature meets continuously, and is now in the first year of a two-year legislative cycle.

Legislation that would require warning labels to be placed on helium balloons or balloon packages, as well as balloon display racks (Senate Bill 1121) was introduced by Senator Connors (R-9) and Senator Bassano (R-21).

- The required label would read: “Release of balloons into the atmosphere may cause serious harm to people and wildlife. Ingestion and entanglement may cause serious injury or death to wildlife.”
- This bill was referred to the Senate Environment Committee. TBC will continue to monitor its status and work to defeat this measure.

## **New York**

Legislation (Assembly Bill 1151 and Senate Bill 5300) that would ban the release of 25 or more balloons and would apply to both latex and metallized balloons were introduced by Assemblyman Grannis (D-65) and Senator Marcellino (R-05) respectively.

- Assembly Bill 1151 was referred to the Codes Committee in May. The Senate companion bill has not moved since its introduction in January.
- New York ended its two-year legislative session in July with no further movement on either bill. The legislature will reconvene in January 2001.

## **LATEX ALLERGY RELATED LEGISLATION:**

### **Pennsylvania**

Legislation (Senate Resolution 211/House Resolution 587) designating October 1st -7th as “Latex Allergy Awareness Week”, were introduced by Senator Mellow (D-22) and Representative Schroder (R-155).

- The bill was introduced to the Pennsylvania Senate on September 27 and adopted that day. The bill was sent to the House on October 3 and adopted that day.

Senator Mellow (D-22) introduced legislation, which urges the Governor to establish a committee to study the adverse effects of latex and latex products (Senate Resolution 43).

- The Senate adopted the bill on October 10. In the House of Representatives, it was introduced and referred to the Rules Committee on October 12.
- The Pennsylvania Legislature's session continues through the end of the year.

## **Rhode Island**

Legislation (House Bill 7654) that would require the Department of Health to promulgate regulations that would require the elimination of the use of latex products in hospitals by June 30, 2002. Effectively, this legislation would ban all latex balloons from hospitals in Rhode Island. Representative Henseler (D-44) introduced this bill.

- The bill was referred to the Health Education and Welfare Committee. There was no activity for this bill before June 30, the end of this year's legislative session.

Legislation which requests the Rhode Island Department of Health to exercise its authority to regulate latex products in healthcare facilities, food services, and day care facilities (House Bill 8438) was introduced by Representatives Dennigan (D-82) and Benoit (D-64). Additionally, the bill would proclaim October 1, 2000 through October 7, 2000 as Latex Allergy Awareness Week.

- The legislation passed the House of Representatives on June 30. It was then sent to the Senate, where it was referred to the Senate Health Education and Welfare Committee.
- The Rhode Island legislative session concluded in June without any further action on the bill.

## **United States House of Representatives**

Legislation promoting latex allergy awareness, research, and treatment (U.S. House Concurrent Resolution 387), was introduced by Representative Davis (D-IL) on July 27.

- The bill was referred to the House Committee on Commerce on July 27. On August 8, the bill was referred to the Subcommittee on Health and Environment.

## **LEGISLATIVE HOTLINE:**

The TBC legislative hotline received more than thirty phone calls this quarter. Many callers reported hearing about TBC from a variety of Internet web sites. Calls from retailers and distributors of balloon products focused on the following issues:

- Balloon releases
- General interest in balloon-related issues
- The impact of balloons on the environment
- The biodegradability of balloons
- Information on helium
- Educational material on balloons for science projects and presentations
- The banning of latex balloons by schools and hospitals due to concerns about latex allergies.

Retailers continue to rely on the TBC balloon hotline to ensure that their balloon practices are conforming to state and local laws.

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