



**Testimony to the Great Lakes and Environment Committee  
Regarding support of HB 4022  
Submitted by: Abby Rubley, Michigan League of Conservation Voters  
March 5, 2009**

Hello, I'm Abby Rubley with the Michigan League of Conservation Voters, an independent, non-partisan organization with a simple mission: to educate voters about how their legislators vote on the environment and to hold those legislators accountable.

We make environmental protection a priority with elected officials, candidates, and voters by mobilizing citizens as a political force for the environment.

Today I am testifying on behalf of **HB 4402** that would restrict the pharmaceutical use of Lindane. Children are the only allowable use left of Lindane. It is so potentially hazardous that it's banned for all uses in 53 countries and the state of California. The EPA withdraw its registration for agricultural uses, it can't be used in veterinary medicine or in the military. Think about that - You can't use this substance on your cat or dog, or on crops, or on soldiers because of its toxic impacts. But, you can use it on your children in Michigan.

The medical and health community in Michigan is asking for this legislation. Questions have arisen about why the Legislature should impose a restriction on this drug as opposed to all the other dangerous drugs out there. This is thinking about the legislation all wrong for one critical reason: the medical and health community in Michigan is REQUESTING this restriction, which they are not doing with other drugs. This should tell you quite a lot about the dominant medical opinions on lindane. You have letters from the major medical organizations in the state, including Michigan Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Michigan Nurses Association, Michigan Chapter of Nurse Practitioners, Michigan Pharmacists Association, and the Michigan Association of School Nurses. You also have strong support from the Michigan Department of Community Health - these letters of support are not just for the restriction bill that you have before but also for a full ban. You do not have any letters from medical groups or any groups at all in the state opposing the bill. Many, if not most, medical and nursing schools are no longer teaching about the use of lindane since it is so potentially dangerous and outdated. Doctors are reporting that they will not even use free samples given to indigent clinics. The Michigan Department of Community Health does not recommend use of lindane for lice or scabies.

It is notable to me that there has not been one doctor or medical professional from within the state that's been willing to testify on behalf of foreign owned company who is the sole distributor of lindane in the US and the only organization opposing the bill as far as I can tell.

---

**Michigan League of Conservation Voters, Political Action for Environmental Protection**

Ann Arbor Office:

213 W. Liberty, Suite 300

Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Phone: (734) 222-9650 • Fax: (734) 222-9651

Grand Rapids Office:

40 Monroe Center NW, Suite 200

Grand Rapids, MI 49503

Phone: (616) 459-6459 • Fax: (616) 459-6469

They have attempted to cast doubt on this legislation which is not surprising given their strong, vested interest in keeping the lindane flowing in Michigan and around the country, where they have followed similar tactics in an attempt to stave off stronger bills than you are considering. But, do not mistake this special interest by a drug company for the public interest that you and the supporting groups from the state are trying to uphold. The company's statements are part of a pattern of extremely aggressive tactics against doctors and advocacy groups and misleading statements issued by the company. In fact, on December 13, 2007, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued a remarkably stern and clear Warning Letter to the company (which is in your packet) requesting that the company "immediately cease the dissemination of volatile promotional materials for Lindane Shampoo" and submit "a comprehensive plan of action to disseminate truthful, non-misleading, and complete corrective messages..."

Finally it is important to note that this legislation is less restrictive than the full bans in 53 countries, the state of California, and the current restrictions for Michigan Medicare participants.

Perhaps the best proof that the only impact this law would have, which is positive, is to look at California. The results in California since the ban are excellent: Lindane is now barely detectable in wastewater, calls to poison control centers about lindane dropped dramatically and there was no change in incidence of lice and scabies. The obvious question of whether this dramatic decline was from agriculture or pharmaceutical use has a simple answer: It was pharmaceutical use because LA County, where the data is from, has no significant agriculture. Michigan's bill would not even ban lindane so those doctors who are outside of the mainstream in medicine who still want to use lindane would still have that opportunity. Yet, we would hopefully see similar results.

Therefore, the Michigan League of Conservation Voters and our many supporters urge you to vote in support of this bill today. This vote is important not just for your record on the environment and protecting the Great Lakes but for your record on health and protecting children. You can side with a pharmaceutical company with deep pockets and a vested interest, or you can side with the Great Lakes and Michigan's children.