



Maine Women's Policy Center

THE VOICE OF MAINE WOMEN

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Cosmetics on Trial

Concerned about toxins not listed in the ingredient label, young women ship off their personal care products to an environmental health lab for testing

Waterville - On Sunday, a group of young women gathered outside of the Waterville Post Office to ship off their personal care products for testing at an environmental health lab.

The young women have come together because of a shared concern around the safety of their everyday personal care products. Some toxins – commonplace in consumer goods – are linked to women's reproductive health concerns such as early puberty, impaired fertility or infertility, ovarian and uterine abnormalities, and breast cancer. The European Union has banned over 1,000 ingredients from cosmetics, while the United States has only banned ten.

The young women are looking for the truth behind the label.

Ultimately, this group would like to see government regulations that make safe products available and affordable for all. "Natural products are expensive and all together unreliable; we need real regulations in the cosmetic industry. We shouldn't have to make the choice between the price and our health," said project participant Michelle Russell, an environmental studies major at Colby College.

"The data gap is terrifying," asserts Tara Brian. "People assume that what they are buying is safe, but, in fact, the regulation is really minimal." These young women, organized as part of a project of the Maine Women's Policy Center, plan to host an event in early April in the Waterville area where they will unveil the results from this cosmetic testing and discuss the need for real government protection in the personal care product industry.

The Maine Women's Policy Center, founded in 1990, is a private nonprofit, non-partisan organization whose purpose is to improve the lives of Maine women and girls through public policy and leadership development.

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