

# LOBBYING

## Federal laws on toxic chemicals not serving consumers

By GREGG RENFREW    MAY. 8, 2019

Our ask of lawmakers mirrors the key areas addressed by the committee, including strengthening the labelling regime for cosmetics, writes Gregg Renfrew, founder and CEO of Beautycounter.



An updated regulatory framework can help businesses thrive while making a lasting positive impact on the health of consumers and the environment. *Photograph courtesy of Unsplash*

Six years ago, I started Beautycounter, a skincare and cosmetics brand, because I learned that the personal-care industry was largely unregulated. As a mother and consumer, I wanted to ensure that the products I was putting on myself and my children were safe.

Beautycounter pledges to do things differently by formulating skin-care and cosmetic products without the more than 1,500 ingredients with known or questionable health impacts. I also pledged that we would advocate to fix the problem by working with government leaders to make sure that everyone, regardless of where they lived or shopped, had access to safer products.

I quickly discovered that I was not alone in my desire for products that were high performing but made with ingredients significantly safer for health. Year by year, our company grew across North America through the daily education by our stable of more than 40,000 independent consultants. Consumers are hungry for cleaner, safer beauty.

In 2017, I was pleased to see the report released by the House Environment Committee, which made 87 recommendations for strengthening the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, a law that was last updated in 1999. The report confirmed that, 20 years later, Canadians were no longer being adequately protected from toxic exposures in the consumer products they use every day, including personal-care products. With the general election this October, it's time for action.

Beautycounter brought 25 clean beauty educators, entrepreneurs, and small business owners from across Canada to meet with their MPs to discuss why reforming the laws dealing with toxic chemicals in consumer products benefits all Canadians. Our ask of lawmakers mirrors the key areas addressed by the committee, including reducing exposure to endocrine-disrupting chemicals, strengthening the labelling regime for cosmetics, and learning more about and removing chemicals of concern.

These protections will not only benefit public health, but encourage more companies making cleaner, safer products to enter the beauty marketplace in Canada, an industry within the country that is projected to reach more than [\\$21-billion](#) by 2021. Canada should be eager to foster the conditions to attract investment and the ability to meet this fast-growing consumer demand.

Today's consumers are more sophisticated than ever and unafraid to demand better, safer products. And they deserve them. Weak laws that fail to adequately protect consumer health and the environment allow market laggards to undercut companies like ours, as they keep cheaper, more harmful products on the market. Only with action by the government and an updated regulatory framework can businesses thrive while making a lasting positive impact on the health of consumers and the environment.

*Gregg Renfrew is the founder and CEO of Beautycounter.*

*The Hill Times*