

# ***PRESS RELEASE***

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*... from the Illinois House of Representatives*

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**  
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## **May Environment and Health Measures Become Law**

**SPRINGFIELD** – On Monday, state Rep. Karen May (D-Highland Park) had three of her legislative measures signed into law that will help improve air quality in public schools, reduce mercury contamination in our food sources and address the growing concern of aging adults with autism.

“These are important bills for the health, safety, and well-being of our children and the families of Illinois,” said May.

May introduced legislation last spring aimed at improving the health and development of children, including House Bill 895, the Green Cleaning Schools Act, and House Bill 943, the Mercury-Added Product Prohibition Act that were signed into law Monday. The Green Cleaning Schools Act will require all elementary and secondary schools in Illinois to purchase environmentally sensitive cleaning supplies that do not expose students and teachers to harmful chemicals. The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that half of all students, teachers and school staff are exposed to polluted indoor air that may be five to 100 times more polluted than outdoor air. The chemicals found in everyday cleaning supplies cause much of this pollution.

May’s House Bill 943 expands on current laws limiting mercury from coal plants and auto switches by banning the sale or distribution of medical devices that contain mercury, including blood pressure cuffs. Such devices account for twenty-eight percent of the mercury pollution created each year. This law will move Illinois into position to have the strictest mercury pollution laws in the United States. It is expected that this ban will cause medical device manufacturers to reach a tipping point whereby it is more economically feasible to manufacture mercury free products for use in the United States.

“Years ago, we had the wisdom to ban lead-based paints because of their potential to impair a child’s mental abilities,” said May. “This was painfully evident in the past few weeks when millions of toys were pulled off the shelf because they contained lead-based paints. Given the fact that children spend hours every day in a classroom and that effective, non-toxic cleaning supplies are readily available, this is the next logical step toward making sure that our children grow up in a healthy environment.”

Finally, House Bill 1535 requires the state to research further funding sources to implement services for adults with autism spectrum disorders. Many individuals with autism require daily assistance for normal functioning and activity from childhood into adulthood. As parents of children and adults with autism age, there is growing concern over how daily service needs will be delivered when their parents are no longer able to provide such care. May co-sponsored this measure to begin addressing this concern at the state level.

House Bills 895, 943, and 1535 all took effect immediately after the governor signed them last Monday. For more information, visit [www.ilga.gov](http://www.ilga.gov), or contact May at (847) 433-9100.

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