Members of the Committee:

My name is Debbie Katz. I am from Placerville, and I am submitting my written testimony for the record for the Environmental Safety & Toxic Materials Committee hearing on Feb 13, 2018.

I recently retired from Sacramento County's Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, where I served as an Environmental Health Officer.

I am concerned about the low blood lead testing among Medi-Cal toddlers, and personally believe that ALL children should be tested between the age of 1 and 2. We miss so many by primarily testing those on public assistance (and only 28% of these children are tested, according to the committee's information). The questionnaire given by doctors to assess potential lead exposure in children, "Do you live in or frequently visit a pre-1978 home," is inadequate. Parents don't think to answer "yes" to reflect the weekly visits to Grandma's or even daily visits to daycare. No one wants to think these visits could cause a child's problem!

Frequently, home remedies, make-up (surma/kohl in Sacramento), spices (turmeric in Sacramento), ritual items, toys, and other things brought in from overseas have high lead levels. This is missed on the questionnaire and in the doctor's office, since lead poisoning is often symptom-free at damaging levels. And it's not just people on public assistance that use these items. Here are a few examples:

1. The sick dog that an astute veterinarian diagnosed with lead poisoning. The dog's family was then found to have very high blood lead levels.
2. A family with a developmentally delayed child, who the Doctor tested for lead exposure on a whim and found the child to have elevated blood lead levels. We found that his mother was giving him a home remedy that contained both lead and mercury.
3. Clandestinely tested the soil in a garden in a downtown Sacramento upper class daycare, which cared for over 100 children, and found the soil to be 500 ppm in the play area. However, those children wouldn't have been tested.

I have many more examples.