

7/31/2018

Hon. Andrew Wheeler, Acting Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Administrator:

In June, the Environmental Protection Agency released its plan for how it will assess the safety of 10 priority chemicals under the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) and it highlights how the EPA's approach to evaluating these chemicals and their health risks will lead to weak chemical safety regulations that will leave the American public's health in jeopardy. Instead of looking at most of the ways that people are exposed to a chemical substance, EPA will not look at exposure through air, water, and waste disposal – even though those are the primary routes of exposure for most people.

That's not all. The Agency is also ignoring so-called "legacy uses" of these chemicals, even though these are significant sources of exposure. Asbestos, which kills as many as 40,000 Americans per year, is a prime, though not the only, example of why this is a problem. Even though asbestos has not been mined or manufactured in the US since 2002 and is no longer added to construction materials, it is still prevalent in older homes and imported materials. Vulnerable populations, including workers and their families who handle asbestos in their workplace and communities living near industrial facilities, have an increased risk because of these exposures. Ignoring legacy uses signals EPA's intent to issue weak regulations that put our health at risk.

Aggregate exposure assessment, including exposures through contaminated water, soil, and air is widely used in risk assessment and TSCA 6(b) requires EPA to analyze exposures from all uses. The EPA's own Children's Health Protection Advisory Committee recommended including these exposures. In ignoring this recommendation, the EPA is tying its own hands from protecting the health of Americans and the environment. Excluding chemicals in the air, ground and water in its analysis, means that the EPA would ignore 68 million pounds from just seven of the 10 chemicals that Americans could be exposed to. Since people of color and low-income communities are disproportionately located near polluting facilities, these fence-line communities are at even greater risk.

This new approach is in direct response to active lobbying by the chemical industry and former chemical industry lobbyists now working at the Agency. The EPA is failing to do its duty and continuing down a path where people will face even greater exposure to dangerous carcinogens, neurotoxins and other dangerous and deadly chemicals.

Finally, the approach to analyzing studies using its own version of systematic review that EPA has outlined in a recently released guidance document and applied in the problem formulations is troubling and inconsistent with current scientific methods. We recommend that EPA conduct risk evaluations under TSCA using the systematic review protocol developed by the National Toxicology Program's Office of Health Assessment and Translation (OHAT) which provides for and "uses a very transparent process to document the basis for scientific judgments." This process ensures a standardized methodology for evaluating scientific studies and provides documentation on how conclusions are reached.

We demand that the EPA comprehensively evaluate chemicals using the OHAT systematic review protocol, based on all hazards, including hormone disruption, and all of the ways in which people may be exposed whether it's in a product, workplace, or through air, water or soil. This type of evaluation is required by TSCA.

Sincerely,

Alaska Community Action on Toxics
Alliance for a Healthy Tomorrow
Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments
Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization
Beyond Pesticides
BlueGreen Alliance
Breast Cancer Action
Breast Cancer Prevention Partners
California Healthy Nail Salon Collaborative
Center for Environmental Health
Children's Environmental Health Network (CEHN)
Citizens' Environmental Coalition
Clean and Healthy New York
Clean Production Action
Clean Water Action
Coalition for a Safe and Healthy Connecticut
Coalition for Social Justice
Collaborative on Health and the Environment
Coming Clean
Commonweal Biomonitoring Resource Center
Communications Workers of America, AFL-CIO
Connecticut Coalition for Environmental Justice
Delaware Concerned Residents for EJ
Ecology Center
Environmental Health Strategy Center
Environmental Justice Health Alliance
Environmental League of MA
Environmental Working Group
Great Neck Breast Cancer Coalition
Green America
GreenBlue Institute
GreenCAPE
Headwater LLC
Healthy Babies Bright Futures
Healthy Building Network
Healthy Legacy Coalition
Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition of MA
Honey Inc.
Huntington Breast Cancer Action
Just Transition Alliance
League of Conservation Voters
Learning Disabilities Association of Georgia
Learning Disabilities Association of Illinois
Learning Disabilities Association of Maine
Learning Disabilities Association of New Jersey
Learning Disabilities Association of South Carolina
Learning Disabilities Association of Texas
Learning Disabilities Association of Utah
Los Jardines Institute
Made Safe
Marin Asian Advocacy Project
Massachusetts Breast Cancer Coalition
New York League of Conservation Voters
New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG)
Non Toxic Revolution
Oregon Environmental Council
Resilient Sisterhood Project
Safer Chemicals Healthy Families
Safer States
Sierra Club
Texas Campaign for the Environment & TCE Fund
The Healthy Schools Network
Toxic-Free Future
Toxics Action Center
UPSTREAM
WE ACT for Environmental Justice
West County Toxics Coalition
Women for a Healthy Environment
Women's Voices for the Earth