

**AllergyKids • Alliance for Healthy Homes • Autism One
Citizens Against Toxic Exposure • Citizens for Environmental Justice
Clean Air Coalition of WNY • Community In-Power and Development Association
Deirdre Imus Environmental Center for Pediatric Oncology • Environmental Working Group
Farmworker Association of Florida • Fluoride Action Network
Friends of the Earth • Gulf Coast Environmental Defense • Healing Every Autistic Life
Louisiana Bucket Brigade • Lowndes Citizens United for Action
Making Our Milk Safe • Moms Rising • The National Autism Association
National Bucket Brigade Coalition • National Refinery Reform Campaign
Oregon Environmental Council • Rachel's Network • The Rimland Center
The Schafer Autism Report • US Autism & Asperger Association**

May 19, 2008

The Honorable Frank R. Lautenberg
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Hilda Solis
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Barbara Boxer
Chair
Committee on Environment and Public Works
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Henry Waxman
Chairman
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Lautenberg, Chairman Boxer, Representative Solis and Chairman Waxman:

We want to applaud you for the introduction of your groundbreaking legislation, *The Kid Safe Chemicals Act*. Once again, you have demonstrated strong leadership in protecting children and other vulnerable members of our population from toxic chemicals in consumer products and the environment.

The nation's toxic chemical regulatory law, *The Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA)* is in drastic need of reform. Passed in 1976 and never amended since, *TSCA* is widely regarded as the weakest of all major environmental laws on the books today. *TSCA* represents the first effort to protect the public health through comprehensive chemical policy reform in more than 30 years.

When passed in 1976, *TSCA* declared safe some 62,000 chemicals already on the market, even though there were little or no data to support this policy. Since that time another 20,000 chemicals have been put into commerce in the United States, also with little or no data to support their safety. This shocking lack of modern scientific information is the direct result of current law that does not give the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) the authority to demand the information it needs to evaluate a chemical's risk or to take action to protect the public health.

TSCA is so deficient as a public health statute that EPA was unable to ban asbestos using the law, even though asbestos is perhaps the most potent cancer causing substance ever introduced into commerce and kills about 10,000 people per year. In the more than 30 years since *TSCA* was passed, EPA has evaluated the safety of just 200 out of 80,000 chemicals, and banned only five.

The human race is now polluted with hundreds of industrial chemicals with little or no understanding of the consequences. Babies are born pre-polluted with as many as 300 industrial chemicals in their bodies when they enter the world. Testing by the Environmental Working Group has identified 455 chemicals in people and, again, no one has any idea if these exposures are safe.

We are at a tipping point where the pollution in people is increasingly associated with a range of serious diseases and conditions from childhood cancer, to autism, ADHD, learning deficits, infertility, reproductive disorders and birth defects. Yet, even as our knowledge about the link between chemical exposures and human disease grows, the government has almost no authority to protect people from even the most hazardous chemicals on the market.

The Kid Safe Chemicals Act would remedy this situation by giving EPA the mandate to protect public health from chemical exposures, and the authority to get the job done. The bill puts the burden of proving chemical safety where it belongs, with the manufacturers, and makes available to the public a wealth of health and safety information used to make safety determinations. *KSCA* recognizes the magnitude of the task and sets priorities for action based on whether chemicals are found in people, with special priority for chemicals found in human umbilical cord blood.

Equally important, *KSCA* does not propose to invent new public health criteria, but instead adopts tough health standards that chemical manufacturers already comply with for other products like pesticides and food additives, and applies these same standards to industrial chemicals that also end up in people.

KSCA pushes us toward a chemical industry of the future, not the past. Hardly a day goes by without publicity about some toxic chemical that poses health risks, creating uncertainty for consumers and businesses alike. The bill promotes the development of critical market mechanisms and green chemistry and at the same time promotes health and safety testing alternatives designed to minimize the use of animals and accelerate the development of alternative non-animal tests.

Congressional action is urgently needed to protect the health of infants, children and other vulnerable populations from pervasive, insidious exposure to toxic chemicals. *KSCA* will provide our children with this much-needed protection, enabling them to grow and develop to their fullest extent.

Thank you again for your leadership on the issue. We all look forward to working with the sponsors to further improve the legislation and to ensure its passage.

Respectfully,

Environmental Working Group
National Refinery Reform Campaign
National Bucket Brigade Coalition
Autism One
Farmworker Association of Florida
Oregon Environmental Council
AllergyKids
Fluoride Action Network
Community-in-Power Development Association
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