

Leading Scientists to Congress: Do Not Block Government List of Cancer-Causing Chemicals

They Say Public Needs Unbiased Assessment; Human Health is at Stake

Contact: Elizabeth Heyd, NRDC, 202-289-2424, ehyd@nrdc.org or Sarah Vogel, EDF, 202-572-3355, svogel@edf.org

WASHINGTON (September 5, 2012) – More than 70 leading scientists are calling on Congress to reject an attempt to block a biennial government assessment of the cancer risks of posed by industrial chemicals and other agents. A letter sent Tuesday by the scientists to key senators and representatives urged lawmakers to resist efforts by the chemical industry and its allies in Congress to “delay and ultimately destroy” the federal government’s efforts to “provide the public with unbiased, authoritative scientific assessments” of such hazardous industrial chemicals as formaldehyde and styrene.

“Honest, hard-working Americans and their families rely on Congress to protect their right to know about health risks from toxic chemicals in their homes, workplaces, schools, and consumer products,” the environmental health scientists wrote.

Their letter expressed strong opposition to a proposal to defund the annual Report on Carcinogens that was approved on July 18, 2012 by the House Appropriations subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies. The Report on Carcinogens is compiled biennially by the National Toxicology Program in the Department of Health and Human Services.

“It would be harmful to public health to suspend the Report on Carcinogens,” said Dr. Henry Anderson of the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health. “Health professionals and the public rely on the Report for an up-to-date, clear, and objective assessment of the current science regarding potential cancer-causing substances.”

“The chemical industry is unhappy when a substance like formaldehyde or styrene is listed in the Report on Carcinogens, and their response has been to blame the messenger,” said Dr. Adam Finkel, Professor of Environmental and Occupational Health at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ). “But a lengthy and inclusive process has led to these evidenced-based determinations. We are calling on Congress not to play along and to instead defend the Report on Carcinogens from special interest attacks.”

Here is a link to the letter: http://docs.nrdc.org/health/hea_12090401.asp

For additional comments about the scientists’ letter and the Report on Carcinogens, contact:

Adam M. Finkel, Sc.D, CIH

Professor of Environmental and Occupational Health, UMDNJ School of Public Health and Executive Director, Penn Program on Regulation, University of Pennsylvania Law School
afinkel@law.upenn.edu
202-406-0042

Henry A. Anderson, MD

Chief Medical Officer, Wisconsin Division of Public Health
Henry.Anderson@WI.gov
608-266-1253
###