



March 11, 2014

The Honorable John Shimkus
US House of Representatives
Chair, House Energy and Commerce
Subcommittee on Environment and the
Economy
2452 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Paul Tonko
US House of Representatives
Ranking Member, House Energy and
Commerce Subcommittee on Environment
and the Economy
2463 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Fred Upton
US House of Representatives
Chair, House Energy and Commerce
Committee
2183 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Henry Waxman
US House of Representatives
Ranking Member, House Energy and
Commerce Committee
2204 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Chemicals in Commerce Act

Dear US Representatives:

As the leading advocate for clean air, fresh water and sustainable land in Ohio, we have been working hard to raise awareness about the issue of unregulated toxic chemicals in the places we live and the products we use every day.

We are encouraged by the bi-partisan discussions on reforming the Toxic Substances Control Act(TSCA); however, we are extremely disheartened by the Chemicals in Commerce Act.

The Chemicals in Commerce Act, recently introduced as a “discussion draft” in the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Environment and the Economy, would do little to move the mark forward on toxic chemical reform. Surprisingly after multiple substantive hearings on TSCA reform, this bill does not incorporate any of the thoughtful recommendations by the public health and environmental community. Rather this bill appears to weaken existing law and provide a public relations cover for the chemical industry.

As a result, the OEC is strongly opposed to this bill. In Ohio, US Representatives Bill Johnson (6th Congressional District) and Bob Latta (5th Congressional District) sit on the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Environment and the Economy. We have asked our OEC members to contact their congressmen to express their opposition to this bill and to request meaningful reform of federal laws on toxic chemicals. We will continue to ask our members to reach out to our US Representatives in Ohio as hearings commence on this bill.

Here in Ohio, where we have very limited laws on the books restricting chemicals in consumer products, strong federal legislation is more important than ever. The medical literature increasingly points to a stronger link between unregulated chemicals and the health problems that plague millions of American families. Public concern about that link has driven positive change in many state policies, in the marketplace, and among America's trading partners. Instead of addressing such concerns, the Chemicals in Commerce Act appears to be an attempt to deny them. It is not a credible reform proposal and should be strongly opposed by anyone concerned about public health and environmental protection.

We need real reform in Washington that:

- 1) Protects the most vulnerable, including pregnant women, children, and heavily impacted communities;
- 2) Takes immediate action on known hazardous chemicals like formaldehyde, lead and others;
- 3) Allows consumers and businesses access to basic health and safety information to make informed decisions;
- 4) Allows states to continue to pass strong laws on toxic chemicals; and
- 5) Has a health-based safety standard.

The Chemicals in Commerce Act is a failed attempt at reform, one which we simply cannot support. Moving forward, public health must be front and center in the debate over TSCA reform. Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Melanie Houston, M.S.
Ohio Environmental Council
Columbus, OH