

Chairman H. Morgan Griffith
Opening Statement—Subcommittee on Environment:
“A Decade Later: Assessing the Legacy and Impact of the Frank R.
Lautenberg Chemical Safety for the 21st Century Act”
January 22, 2025
As prepared for delivery

I am really looking forward to working with you, Ranking Member Tonko. I am hopeful we can work together on some bipartisan legislation going through this Subcommittee.

Today is not only my first hearing as Chair of the Subcommittee, but it is the first subcommittee hearing the House Energy and Commerce Committee is holding to start the 119th Congress.

The American people have spoken loud and clear—they’ve had enough of rising prices and a regulatory burden that threatens energy reliability, reduces American competitiveness, and in some cases, makes for stagnant economic growth.

In general, I’ve long believed Congress needs to get back into the practice of passing regular authorizations. As Chair of this Subcommittee, it is my goal to modernize some of our major environmental laws and enable predictable, common sense, regulation.

I’m glad we’ve hit the ground running with this hearing and hope that we have signaled our commitment to dig into the statutory language to find out where we can make the law work better for all interested parties.

To that end, today’s hearing will examine the Frank R. Lautenberg Chemical Safety for the 21st Century Act, or the Lautenberg Act.

Nearly ten years ago, the Members of this Committee worked tirelessly to develop the Lautenberg Act to reform the Toxic Substances Control Act, often referred to as “TSCA.”

TSCA governs the Environmental Protection Agency, or EPA’s, regulation of new and existing chemicals and the chain of commerce for products containing those chemicals.

This was no easy row to hoe—the Lautenberg Act made the most significant changes to TSCA since it became law in 1976. The Lautenberg Act enjoyed strong bipartisan support in this Committee before becoming law in 2016. I was proud to be part of that process.

However, nearly ten years have passed since the Lautenberg Act’s passage. Both Democrat and Republican Administrations at EPA have had the opportunity to implement the Act’s procedures for collecting new information on chemicals, reviewing new chemicals, and for regulating those that the EPA determines pose an “unreasonable risk.”

And each Administration, as we will hear today, has encountered a number of challenges in implementing the Act.

In 2023, the Government Accountability Office found that, between 2017 and 2022, EPA completed only 10 percent of the pre-manufacture chemical reviews within the time limit laid out in the Lautenberg Act.¹ With the ten-year anniversary of the Lautenberg Act's passage quickly approaching, today's hearing will provide us an opportunity to learn more about what's working and what's not at the EPA's Office of Pollution Prevention and Toxics.

And it's important that we make the most of this opportunity to create that record. Among other things, TSCA, as amended by the Lautenberg Act, governs the EPA's processes for reviewing new chemicals or in allowing new uses for existing chemicals before those products can be sold to consumers in the United States. Chemicals are part of manufacturing methods and products that we depend on for our everyday life.

New chemicals, utilized in a safe manner, not only lead to new products that enhance our quality of life but also are necessary for addressing crucial challenges like harnessing energy resources and treating disease.

Similarly, our economic competitiveness and national security depend on our ability to innovate and bring new technologies to market safely and efficiently. As chemicals are part of nearly every product, and new chemistries are essential to developing better products, the TSCA regulatory scheme has a profound impact across nearly every sector of our economy. New chemicals and new uses for existing chemicals must undergo EPA review.

If these reviews don't take place in a timely manner, our international competitors could gain an edge, and more production would likely shift overseas.

We are fortunate to have a panel of experts joining us to help us pinpoint shortcomings with our current regulatory mechanisms and to discuss potential opportunities for reform.

Today, we will hear testimony from Mr. Chris Jahn, President and Chief Executive Officer of the American Chemistry Council, or ACC. The ACC serves as an organization of chemical companies who often engage in EPA's regulatory process, including new chemical reviews.

Also joining us is Mr. Jeff Moody, the Vice President of Government Relations for the American Fuel and Petrochemical Manufacturers. He will share the experiences of refiners and manufacturers that comply with TSCA to make the products we depend on every day.

We are also glad to have Dr. Richard Engler. Prior to his current role as Director of Chemistry at the ACTA group, Dr. Engler served at the Environmental Protection Agency for 17 years and will be able to share more about the agency staff's experience implementing the Act.

¹ [02.23.23 GAO: EPA Chemical Reviews: Workforce Planning Gaps Contributed to Missed Deadlines](#)

Additionally, Dr. Maria Doa, the Senior Director of Chemicals Policy at the Environmental Defense Fund will offer testimony. Before joining the Environmental Defense Fund in 2021, Dr. Doa served at the Environmental Protection Agency for 30 years, working on chemical safety and TSCA.