

April 7, 2010

THE
CATHOLIC HEALTH
ASSOCIATION
OF THE UNITED STATES

The Honorable Barbara Boxer
Chair, Environment and Public
Works Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC

The Honorable Frank Lautenberg
Chair, Superfund, Toxics, and
Environmental Health Subcommittee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC

The Honorable Henry Waxman
Chair, Energy and Commerce
Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC

The Honorable Bobby Rush
Chair, Commerce, Trade and
Consumer Protection Subcommittee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC



On behalf of the Catholic Health Association of the United States, the leadership organization representing the Catholic health ministry, its hospitals, long term care facilities, systems and sponsors, I am writing to express support for Congress to improve the nation's chemical regulatory system by strengthening the Toxic Substance Control Act (TSCA). The nation's largest group of not-for-profit health providers, our 620 Catholic hospitals and 61 Catholic health systems serve patients nationwide and account for more than one-fifth of admissions in 22 states.

This is an important issue for Catholic health care providers because of our commitments to improve public health, to provide safe health care, and to protect all aspects of creation. Our organizations are committed not only to healing, but to prevention. Revision of the TSCA is needed to protect public health including the health of children and the unborn, who are especially vulnerable to the adverse effects of toxic chemicals. There is growing evidence that chemical exposure leads to cancer, birth defects, asthma, developmental problems and other serious health problems. Addressing the failures of the chemical regulatory system is one of the most critical initiatives to prevent disease and protect public health.

In recent years, Catholic health care organizations have taken steps to ensure that we deliver health care in a way that is environmentally responsible. We, along with other health care providers, have worked to eliminate the use of mercury, to decrease hazardous and other waste, and to be more energy efficient. As part of our commitment to be environmentally responsible, we need to know that the chemicals we use are safe for our patients, workers and communities.

We recommend that Congress strengthen the national chemical oversight system by mandating:

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- Immediate phase out of the worst chemicals, including those that build up in people and the environment;
- Public disclosure by chemical manufacturers of the health and environmental hazards, use, and exposure information for all chemicals;
- Proof by chemical manufacturers that their products are safe, in order to protect the most vulnerable populations;
- Incentives for the development and use of safe alternatives to hazardous chemicals.

We appreciate your attention to this important public safety issue and would be pleased to work with you as you revise and strengthen the Toxic Substance Control Act.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michael Rodgers". The signature is written in black ink and has a fluid, connected style.

Michael Rodgers
Sr. Vice President, Advocacy and Public Policy