

Dear Senator Leahy,

We represent health professionals, parents of children with learning disabilities, Vermont businesses, environmental experts and concerned families in the Green Mountain State who have come together to support reform of our nation's outdated chemical policies. The scientific evidence linking common chemicals to the health problems that burden American families is overwhelming.

The 1976 law – the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) – is antiquated and based on old science and it does little to protect our families and children from dangerous chemicals. While TSCA reform is well overdue, we must make sure that new legislation protects our families and children from toxic chemicals.

We believe there is an opportunity for landmark TSCA reform this year that provides greater protection of health and safety while also providing regulated industry with a rational and predictable system. We urge you to support legislation that would ensure the safety of our families and children from toxic chemicals. We urge that you withhold your support for any legislation that does not make meaningful improvement to our public health protections.

Unfortunately, we understand that Senators Vitter and Udall plan to introduce their last draft of the Chemical Safety Improvement Act as new legislation. Though much improved over the original bill, that draft still contained a number of critical flaws and shortcomings that make it unworthy of your support.

- The schedule in the draft would have only addressed roughly 10 chemicals over five years. That is not a serious schedule.
- There was no funding mechanism for EPA to perform the additional work.
- EPA was directed to set potentially many chemicals aside as “low priority” under murky criteria and without judicial review.
- Dozens of state policies that have already improved public health and the environment – including many policies already in place in Vermont – would be pre-empted, even in the absence of meaningful federal action.
- There was no action required on even chemicals like persistent, bioaccumulative toxics (PBTs) and asbestos that have already been assessed beyond serious question.
- The safety reviews would not take into account real-world conditions, like those that led to the recent spill in West Virginia that denied drinking water to hundreds of thousands of people.

We ask that you withhold your support from any reform that hasn't addressed the issues outlined above and instead support negotiations in the Environment and Public Works Committee between Chairman Inhofe and Senator Boxer toward legislation that would make a meaningful positive difference and therefore attract broader support.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue. We are happy to act as a resource as you review proposed legislation.

Sincerely,

Vermont Public Interest Research Group

Vermont Conservation Voters

Voices for Vermont's Children

Main Street Landing

Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility

Seventh Generation

Vermont State Nurses Association

Planned Parenthood of Northern New England

Toxics Action Center

Informed Green Solutions