



A national campaign calling for stronger federal standards on toxic chemicals



It's time for common sense limits on toxic chemicals

Dangerous chemicals are in our homes, places of work, and the products we use every day. Every week, new science is linking the increase in exposure to toxic chemicals to the increase in serious and chronic health problems among Americans.

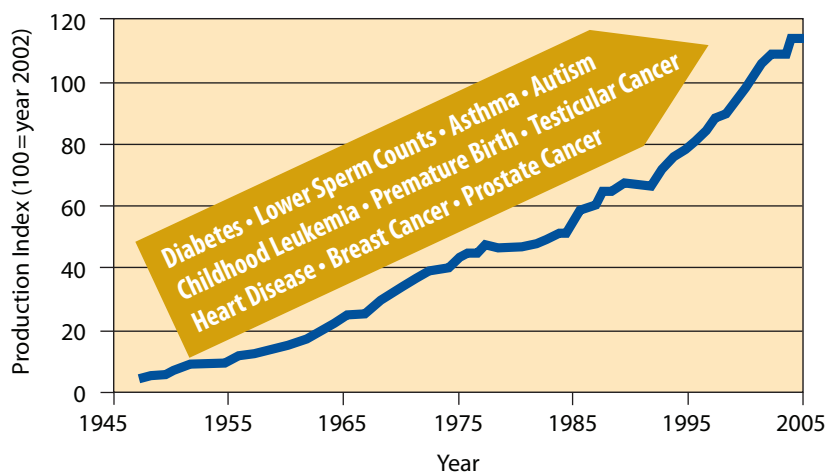
While the rates of asthma, diabetes, childhood cancers, infertility, and learning and behavioral disorders keep going up, the federal system that should protect us from health-harming chemicals hasn't changed in 33 years. The Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA)—intended to give the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) the power to regulate toxic chemicals—just doesn't work.

The EPA has only required testing on approximately 200 of the more than 80,000 chemicals that have been on the market since the law passed in 1976. Clearly, TSCA is not working.

Now, we have the chance to fix this problem—and to protect future generations from serious health and environmental harm. Bombarded with disturbing news stories and scientific studies, Americans from all walks of life have started to demand change. And with a new Congress and administration, we have the chance to build on this momentum and pass a strong bill to reform TSCA—and start putting common sense limits on harmful chemicals.



Growth in the Chemical Industry & Chronic Disease



How our lax chemical rules made Hurricane Katrina even worse



American businesses are changing how they use chemicals

STAPLES. Kaiser Permanente. Hewlett-Packard. Hospira. True Textiles. Catholic Healthcare West. Seventh Generation. Method. Earthbound Farms. Leading businesses are redesigning their products and encouraging their suppliers to move away from the use of dangerous chemicals.

“We’ve taken a cautious approach to materials, meaning that where there is credible evidence that a material we’re using may result in environmental or public health harm, we should strive to replace it with safer alternatives.”

—Kathy Gerwig, Kaiser Permanente

FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) supplied Hurricane Katrina survivors with trailers lined with plywood imported from China. The plywood was made with adhesives that release large amounts of formaldehyde, a chemical known to cause cancer, asthma attacks, and other breathing problems, and is suspected of harming the nervous and immune systems.

Unlike the U.S., China, the European Union, and Japan have banned the type of toxic plywood used in the FEMA trailers. China manufactures a safer, low-formaldehyde version to sell to those countries, but continues to make the cheaper, high-formaldehyde version for sale in the U.S. When petitioned to take action to control the problem, the EPA said it doesn’t have the authority to act under TSCA.

Formaldehyde in FEMA trailers is but one example of the kind of stories we will continue to hear unless the U.S. updates its policies to keep our citizens safe and to promote the innovation and green industries we need to stay competitive in the global marketplace.

“Made in USA should be a guarantee, not a warning.”

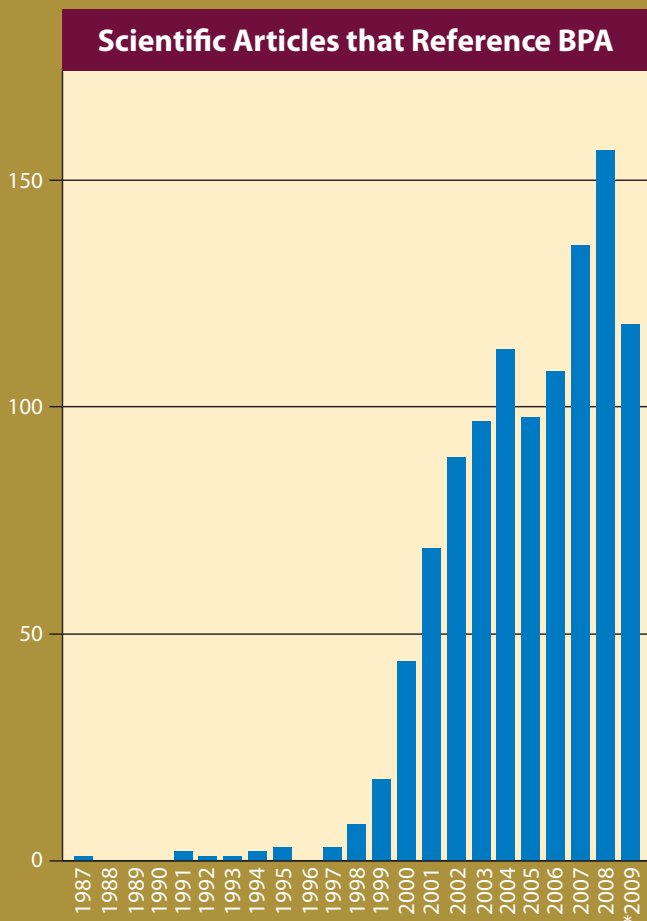
Michael Wright,
United Steelworkers,
quoting consumer advocate
Esther Peterson

How do we know that the Toxic Substances Control Act, our national chemical policy, needs to be fixed?

Look at the numbers:

Since **1976** when TSCA was passed, more than **80,000** different chemicals have been produced and used in the United States. In these **33** years, EPA has required testing on just **200** of these 80,000 chemicals. Only **5** chemicals have been restricted. EPA tried to use TSCA to restrict asbestos **18** years ago and failed. It hasn't tried since.

Science changes but regulations haven't kept up: A BPA case study



*Total as of July 2009

For 33 years, TSCA has stayed the same. But the science on how chemicals can cause harm has changed dramatically. Look at Bisphenol A: Ten years ago, there were very few studies on this chemical used to make baby bottles, plastic food and beverage containers, and the linings of canned food, soda cans, and baby food jars. Over the last decade, an explosion of new research has linked BPA to cancer, heart disease, obesity, infertility, and hyperactivity. Motivated by public concern over this new science, states, cities, retailers, and manufacturers are doing what EPA can't—taking action to protect us from this dangerous chemical.



What we want

Congress is writing a new proposal to reform TSCA, updating last year's Kid-Safe Chemicals Act. Using common sense principles and current science, the Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families campaign will work with Congress to repair our broken chemical management system.

Here's what the Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families Campaign wants Congress to do:

1. Immediately initiate action on chemicals we know are extremely dangerous.

Persistent, bioaccumulative toxicants (PBTs) are uniquely hazardous. Any such chemical to which people could be exposed should be phased out of commerce. Exposure to other toxic chemicals, such as formaldehyde, that have already been extensively studied, should be reduced to the maximum extent feasible. Green chemistry research should be expanded and safer chemicals favored over those with known health hazards.

2. Require basic information to identify chemicals of concern.

Chemical manufacturers should be held responsible for the safety of their products and should be required to provide full information on the health and environmental hazards associated with their chemicals, how they are used, and the ways that the public or workers could be exposed. The public, workers, and businesses should have full access to information about safety of chemicals.

3. Protect all people and vulnerable groups using the best science.

Chemicals should meet a standard of safety for all people, including children, pregnant women, and workers. The extra burden of toxic chemical exposure on people of color, low-income and indigenous communities must be reduced. The EPA should adopt the recommendations of The National Academy of Sciences on how to better assess risks from chemicals. And regulators should expand the development and use of information gleaned from "biomonitoring," the science of detecting human chemical contamination, to inform and impel efforts to reduce such exposures.

Who we are

Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families is a groundbreaking and growing coalition of diverse groups united by their common concern about toxic chemicals in our homes, places of work, and products we use every day.

The federal system that should protect us from health-harming chemicals just doesn't work. The Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families campaign channels the collective expertise, influence, and passion of more than four million individuals into a powerful movement. We invite you to join these founding organizations.

Alaska Community Action on Toxics	Learning Disabilities Association
American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities	Maine League of Conservation Voters
American Nurses Association	Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association
Association of Reproductive Health Professionals	Maine People's Alliance
The Autism Society	Maine Women's Lobby
Breast Cancer Fund	Moms Rising
Center for Environmental Health	Mount Sinai Children's Environmental Health Center
Center for International Environmental Law	Natural Resources Council of Maine
Clean New York	Natural Resources Defense Council
Clean Production Action	Nurses for Global Health
Clean Water Action	Oregon Center for Environmental Health
Coalition for a Safe & Healthy Connecticut	Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Commonwealth Connecticut Coalition for Environmental Justice	Physicians for Social Responsibility
Developmental Disabilities Nurses Association	REACT—Rubbertown Emergency Action
Earthjustice	Reproductive Health Technologies Project
Ecology Center	Safer States
Environment Illinois	Toxic Justice
Environmental Defense Fund	Toxics Action Center
Environmental Health Fund	US Public Interest Research Group
Environmental Health Strategy Center	Washington Public Interest Research Group
GHASP/Mothers for Clean Air	Washington Toxics Coalition
Galveston Baykeeper	WE ACT for Environmental Justice
Greenpeace	Women's Voices for the Earth
Healthy Child Healthy World	
Informed Green Solutions, Inc.	
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy	
Just Transition Alliance	

Add your voice to the millions who are asking for common sense limits on toxic chemicals. Join us today!

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