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**POLL FINDS AMERICANS VERY CONCERNED
ABOUT EXPOSURE TO TOXIC CHEMICALS**

Voters want the EPA to be given more power to regulate chemicals

WASHINGTON – A poll conducted in August, 2009 by the opinion research firm Lake Research Partners found that Americans are very concerned with the way chemicals are regulated for consumer use in the U.S. The findings come as new legislation—an overhaul of the 1976 Toxic Substances Control Act—is expected to be introduced soon in both Houses of the U.S. Congress.

Voters are particularly concerned that, under the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA), chemicals in existence prior to 1976 were grandfathered in and allowed to be used and produced in the U.S. without testing or a demonstration of safety. (87 percent were somewhat or very concerned; 66 percent were very concerned). Eighty percent of voters were concerned that the EPA was unsuccessful in banning asbestos under the current law. Eighty-four percent were concerned that EPA has mandated testing of barely 200 out of the more than 80,000 chemicals on the market in the years that TSCA has been in effect.

“What’s really surprising is that voters across almost all demographic groups—Democrats, Republicans and Independents, said that they didn’t think that regulations on chemicals are strong enough,” said pollster Celinda Lake. “People definitely are not confident about how chemicals are currently regulated, but they’re ready to give the EPA authority to protect consumers.”

Hundreds of scientific studies in recent years have revealed concerns about chemicals like bisphenol A (BPA) and phthalates, which are widely used in baby bottles, pacifiers, canned

foods and children's and pet toys. These studies associate such chemicals with a variety of health problems and chronic diseases such as the rise in diabetes, asthma, increased risk of certain types of cancer and infertility. Consumer confidence in the safety of products has also been undermined by news of dangerous levels of formaldehyde in the trailers provided to Hurricane Katrina victims.

“The public is aware of the growing body of science linking common chemicals to chronic diseases and they're waking up to the fact that the existing law isn't working.” says Andy Igrejas, director of the Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families coalition. “Americans are doing their best to shop smart, but we can't protect our families without help and without strong reforms to put common-sense limits on toxic chemicals.”

Majorities of Democrats, Independents, and Republicans say they would be in favor of legislation that would take toxic chemicals off the market if they have been detected in newborn babies or infants (Democrats – 66 percent much more favorable, Independents – 52 percent, Republicans – 59 percent), and that would mandate immediate reductions in exposure to other toxic chemicals, such as formaldehyde, that have been extensively studied (Democrats - 69 percent much more favorable, Independents – 51 percent, Republicans – 57 percent).

The poll was commissioned by the Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families coalition and has a margin of error of +/- 3.1 percent. The poll was conducted among 1000 registered voters nationwide Aug. 25 to 31, 2009.

Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families is a growing coalition of 100 groups united by their common concern about toxic chemicals in our homes, places of work and products we use every day. A full list of coalition members is here: <http://saferchemicals.org/about/who.html>

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