

The Honorable John Shimkus  
Chairman  
Energy and Commerce  
Subcommittee on Environment and the  
Economy  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Paul Tonko  
Ranking Member  
Energy and Commerce  
Subcommittee on Environment and the  
Economy  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Fred Upton  
Chairman  
Energy and Commerce  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Henry Waxman  
Ranking Member  
Energy and Commerce  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

March 11, 2014

Dear Chairmen Shimkus and Upton and Ranking Members Tonko and Waxman:

As organizations dedicated to improving the health and wellness of women and their families, we urge you to reject the proposed draft bill, the “Chemicals In Commerce Act (CICA).”

Coming on the heels of the chemical spill in West Virginia, this proposed draft bill is particularly audacious. This bill does nothing to protect us from the specter of such devastating accidents in the future or the impact of the chemicals released into the environment. The bill would actually roll back the very limited oversight the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) currently possesses.

Instead of *regressing*, we urgently need progress toward real reform that would protect the health of all Americans. A steadily growing body of science indicates that toxic chemicals are negatively impacting the reproductive health and fertility of women, men and young people through increased rates of early puberty, infertility, uterine fibroids, birth defects and declining quality and quantity of sperm. Moreover, unregulated chemicals can have a strong negative impact on maternal health and fetal development. Other health effects linked to toxic chemical exposure include, among other things, cancers and learning disabilities. This proposed bill would not reduce our exposure nor would it provide information through which consumers could make their own decisions about how best to protect their health or the health of their families.

The burden of toxic exposure is not shared equally. While we are all exposed to toxic chemicals, low-income communities and communities of color are more likely to be directly exposed to toxic chemicals at work, at home, and through consumer products. As a result, they endure the consequences in greater proportions. Compounding the problem, these same communities are less likely to have access to health insurance or quality, affordable care to prevent and address health problems that may have environmental

causes. The draft bill's failure to provide specific action to protect those who are most at-risk from chemical hazards is particularly disheartening.

Furthermore, the proposed bill would preempt many state and local laws that currently provide a modicum of protection for children, pregnant women and other at-risk populations. Far from curing the problem, this proposal -- with no deadlines, no protection for vulnerable populations, weakened authority of the EPA to restrict harmful chemicals, and limited EPA ability to get health and safety information from chemical manufacturers -- would lead to greater harm.

If the chemical spill in West Virginia taught us anything, it is that we need to strengthen our nation's chemical laws, not further weaken them. We urge you to be a leader on this issue by rejecting the CICA and working with us to create legislation that will truly protect women and families.

Sincerely,

Reproductive Health Technologies Project  
MomsRising  
Advocates for Youth  
Association of Reproductive Health Professionals  
Black Women's Health Imperative  
Eco-Mom Alliance  
Forward Together  
Healthy Child Healthy World  
Institute for Science and Human Values  
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum  
National Center for Lesbian Rights  
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health  
National Women's Health Network  
National Women's Law Center  
Physicians for Reproductive Health  
Planned Parenthood Federation of America  
RESOLVE  
Sexuality Information and Education Council and the U.S. (SIECUS)  
Women for A Healthy Environment