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February, 2012

To Senator Ron Wyden:

As Oregon health care professionals, we urge you to support the Safe Chemicals Act of 2011 (S 847), introduced by Senator Frank Lautenberg (D- NJ). We commend Senator Jeff Merkley for cosponsoring this legislation. We urge you to join him as a cosponsor and use your good offices to see this bill through the Senate and into the House as soon as possible.

Chemicals in commerce are regulated by the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA), a statute that has not had a major overhaul since it passed in 1976. TSCA is ineffective, allowing chemicals to enter the market without adequate safety testing. Americans are then exposed to chemicals through consumer products, air, water, soil, and food.

The Safe Chemicals Act of 2011 would, for the first time, require the chemical industry to ensure chemicals are safe *before* they end up in our homes, schools, and places of work. The Safe Chemicals Act of 2011 would protect our families and communities.

There are health implications to these exposures. Evidence indicates that industrial chemicals increase the risk of health problems ranging from asthma and infertility to heart disease, obesity, birth defects, neurodevelopmental effects in children, and cancer. Estimates of the proportion of the disease burden that can be attributed to chemicals vary widely; whatever the actual contribution, effective chemical policy reform will incorporate the last 30 years of science to reduce the chemical exposures that contribute to the rising incidence of chronic disease.

A decline in the incidence of chronic diseases can also be expected to bring health care cost savings. Even if chemical policy reform leads to reductions in toxic chemical exposures that translate into just a tenth of one percent reduction of health care costs, it would save the U.S. health care system an estimated \$5 billion every year. These health care costs do not include the many other kinds of costs, such as the costs of raising a child with autism or coping with a young mother's breast cancer diagnosis. Chemical policy reform holds the promise of reducing the economic, social and personal costs of debilitating chronic diseases by creating a more healthy future for all Americans.

The Safe Chemicals Act of 2011 would ensure that the EPA has minimum safety data sets for the health risks of all chemicals, and authority to require any data beyond the minimum data set needed to determine safety of a chemical. The bill has several provisions to ensure that no duplicative or unnecessary testing occurs and that EPA accepts and encourages the



use of rapid, low-cost, non-animal tests that provide high quality data.

The legislation requires the EPA to prioritize chemicals based on risk, focusing resources on the chemicals most likely to cause harm. Expedited action to reduce exposures would then reduce risk from chemicals of highest concern. Persistent, bioaccumulative, and toxic chemicals for which there is the potential for widespread exposure will be placed into the category of chemicals requiring immediate risk management. EPA must then impose conditions that will immediately reduce exposure.

The bill would establish a public database, to provide broad access to reliable chemical information for mothers, workers and industry. The bill narrows the conditions under which data submitted by industry can be claimed to be confidential business information (CBI) while still ensuring appropriate protections for legitimate CBI.

Finally, the Safe Chemicals Act of 2011 authorizes the EPA to prescribe regulations to carry out the provisions of the Stockholm Convention, the Protocol on Persistent Organic Pollutants to the Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution, and the Rotterdam Convention. These international protocols are vitally important to protect the health of all the people on the planet, and the generations to come.

Children and families across Oregon and throughout the country are being exposed to chemicals found in everyday products and are asking for your leadership. Our beloved Willamette and Columbia Rivers and many other water bodies are contaminated with chemicals that harm wildlife and our health.

There is strong support in Oregon for these provisions and improvements. We know you are a leader that protects public health, the environment and our local economies. We look forward to hearing about your plans to ensure a timely vote on the Safe Chemicals Act of 2011, and meaningful reform of the Toxic Substances Control Act.

Cc: Jeff Merkley, Earl Blumenauer, Peter DeFazio, Greg Walden, Kurt Schrader  
Governor John Kitzhaber

