

United States Senate

August 31, 2016

The Honorable Gina McCarthy
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Ave, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Administrator McCarthy:

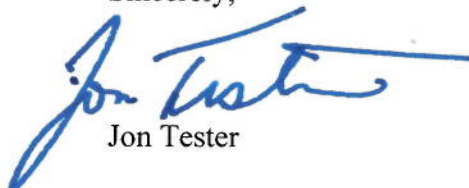
I am writing to urge you to include asbestos among the first ten chemicals for evaluation under the new chemical safety framework established by the Frank R. Lautenberg Chemical Safety for the 21st Century Act. As you are well aware, asbestos is still found in a wide variety of everyday items and in our homes, schools, and businesses. It is critically important that EPA uses the new tools Congress provided it to protect families and workers from this hazardous substance.

Montanans know all too well the hazards of asbestos. Asbestos exposure related to the now defunct W.R. Grace vermiculite mine near the picturesque town of Libby, Montana has been linked to thousands of cases of asbestos-related diseases, taking a heavy toll on health of the miners who worked there and the broader community. As Congress debated reforms to the Toxic Substance Control Act of 1976 (TSCA), I worked with my colleagues to strengthen the Senate bill and maintain robust provisions in the final law to ensure that dangerous chemicals like asbestos would receive safety assessments and action in the near term.

The Chemical Safety for the 21st Century Act removed a number of obstacles that prevented meaningful asbestos regulation for decades, such as requiring consideration of cost when making a decision as to whether or not the a chemical is unsafe and requiring adoption of the "least burdensome" regulatory requirement. The new law also places a priority on review and action on the riskiest chemicals, including those that are persistent and bio-accumulative, known human carcinogens and those with high toxicity. Based on those priorities outlined from Congress, I would hope that asbestos would be among the first chemicals receiving action under the new law.

Making this issue a priority could prevent thousands of asbestos-related deaths every year and ensure that our children our children's children are protected from this insidious and pervasive chemical. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Jon Tester