October 16, 2020

The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.
Chairman, Committee on Energy and Commerce
2107 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Greg Walden
Ranking Member, Committee on Energy and Commerce
2185 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Paul Tonko
Chairman, Subcommittee on Environment
2369 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Shimkus
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Environment
2217 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Continued SUPPORT for the Alan Reinstein Ban Asbestos Now Act (ARBAN) H.R. 1603

Dear Chairman Pallone, Ranking Member Walden, Chairman Tonko and Ranking Member Shimkus,

On behalf of the Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization (ADAO), an independent nonprofit dedicated to preventing asbestos exposure, we respectfully request that any opposition or concerns regarding the Alan Reinstein Ban Asbestos Now (ARBAN) Act (H.R. 1603) could be resolved in hopes to move ARBAN back to the House Floor after the election.

During the past 18 months, you have heard the many experts confirm that nearly 40,000 Americans die from preventable asbestos-caused diseases each year, yet imports and use continue. Asbestos has, and continues to place Americans at risk for disabilities, diseases, and death. Mike Mattmuller, a mesothelioma patient, spoke at numerous meetings and staff briefings about the impact asbestos had on himself and his family. Tragically, Mike died in April and leaves behind a young wife and four-year-old daughter.

Support for your bill includes AFL-CIO, American Federation of Teachers, American Public Health Association, International Association of Firefighters, and many other stakeholders who recognize the importance of H.R. 1603 to protect public health.

Americans cannot afford to wait another two years for an asbestos ban, a legacy study, and for the Chemical Data Reporting (CDR) rule, under the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA), to be improved.

Thanks to the hard work of your Committee on Energy and Commerce and staff, H.R. 1603 is the most comprehensive bill with bipartisan support in over a decade. We look forward to working with you as you continue efforts to protect Americans from asbestos.

With our sincere thanks,

Arthur L. Frank MD, PhD, Co-Chair Scientific Advisory Board ADAO
Brent Kynoch, Environmental Information Association
Richard A. Lemen, Ph.D., MSPH, Assistant Surgeon General, U.S. Public Health Service (ret.) and Co-Chair Scientific Advisory Board ADAO

Celeste Monforton, DrPH, MPH
Linda Reinstein, President and Co-Founder of ADAO
Robert Sussman, JD

CC Representative Suzanne Bonamici
Senator Jeff Merkley
The Alan Reinstein Ban Asbestos Now Act of 2019 (ARBAN)  
H.R. 1603 and S. 717

Each year, an estimated 40,000 Americans die from preventable asbestos-caused diseases, yet asbestos imports, and use continues. On November 19, 2019, the Committee on Energy and Commerce reported H.R. 1603 to the Floor with a strong bipartisan vote of 47-1.

ARBAN would accomplish six critical public health objectives:

1. It would ban the importation and use of asbestos, and asbestos-containing products in the U.S. within one year of enactment.
2. Chlor-alkali plants using asbestos diaphragms would be required to eliminate the use of asbestos and convert to non-asbestos technology following a 10-year transition period.
3. The bill would establish a new Right-to-Know program to require current importers, processors and distributors to report and disclose to the public how much asbestos is in U.S. commerce, where and how it is used, and who is exposed.
4. The National Academy of Sciences (NAS) would conduct a comprehensive study of risks presented by “legacy” asbestos used in building construction decades ago but still present in millions of residences, businesses, factories, public buildings, and schools.
5. The presence of asbestos contaminants in consumer products and construction materials would be stringently controlled.
6. The hazardous Libby Amphibole form of asbestos, found in attic insulation in millions of homes across the U.S., would be covered by the ban.

ARBAN Supporters Include
Attorneys General of California, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, and the District of Columbia: AFL-CIO; American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees; American Federation of Teachers; American Public Health Association; Beautycounter; Breast Cancer Prevention Partners; Campaign for Safe Cosmetics; Canadian Environmental Law Association; Center for Environmental Health; Collegium Ramazzini; Environmental Health Strategy Center; Environmental Information Association; Environmental Protection Network; Environmental Working Group; The Fealgood Foundation; Global Ban Asbestos Network; GO 2 Foundation for Lung Cancer; Hazards: International Association of Heat and Frost Insulators and Allied Workers; International Association of Fire Fighters; Kids In Danger; Less Cancer; Natural Resources Defense Council; OK International; Public Citizen; Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families; Toxic-Free Future; Union of Concerned Scientists; United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipe Fitting Industry; United Automobile, Aerospace, and Agricultural Implement Workers of America; United States Public Interest Research Groups; and internationally, Associação Brasileira dos Expostos ao Amianto.