



Board of Directors

June 12, 2013

Linda Reinstein
President

The Honorable John Shimkus
Chairman
House Energy & Commerce Committee
Subcommittee on Environment & Economy
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Paul Tonko
Ranking Member
House Energy & Commerce Committee
Subcommittee on Environment & Economy
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

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Re: Title I of the Toxic Substances Control Act: Understanding its History and Reviewing its Impact

Dear Chairman Shimkus and Ranking Member Tonko:

The Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization (ADAO), an independent non-profit organization, is dedicated to eliminating asbestos disease through education and advocacy. As a mesothelioma widow, I applaud you for holding the “Title I of the Toxic Substances Control Act: Understanding its History and Reviewing its Impact” hearing.

Asbestos, a known carcinogen, is responsible for the largest man-made environmental disaster. The World Health Organization (WHO) has estimated that 107,000 people worldwide die each year from mesothelioma, lung cancer, and asbestosis. The facts are irrefutable – asbestos causes deadly cancerous diseases and there is no safe level of exposure. Asbestos-related diseases remain a major public health crisis and Americans need and deserve legislation to reform TSCA to prevent toxic exposures to eliminate disabilities and deaths.

The first clinically recorded case of asbestos-induced lung disease, later known as asbestosis, was reported in London, in a 33-year-old man who worked in an asbestos textile plant for 14 years, by a Charing Cross Hospital physician Dr. M. Murray in 1906. More than 100 years after the first documented case of asbestos-related disease, we are still seeing nearly 10,000 Americans die each year from asbestos. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency spent years trying unsuccessfully to ban asbestos under the Toxic Substances Control Act. Despite the agency’s best efforts, asbestos continues to be imported into the United States, evidence of how much we need an overhaul of federal toxics law. In fact, a wide range of stakeholders cite this failure as the prime example of how the Toxic Substances Control Act fails to protect people from exposure to harmful chemicals.

In light of this, ADAO thanks you for taking the time to hold a hearing on the Toxic Substances Control Act, as this issue is deserving of attention. On behalf of the American citizens, we urge you to recognize and educate others that asbestos remains a worldwide public health hazard and the need for legislation that protects Americans is crucial. Although bills like the Chemical Safety Improvement Act, introduced in the Senate on May 22, have been cited as a path toward meaningful reform, ADAO cannot support such legislation without greater protections for public health.

Sincerely,

Linda Reinstein

President and Co-Founder, Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization