

UNITED STATES SENATE ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS HEARING  
"Strengthening Public Health Protections by Addressing Toxic Chemical Threats"  
Linda Reinstein, President/Co-founder and Mesothelioma Widow  
Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization (ADAO)  
Wednesday, July 31, 2013

Thank you for the honor and opportunity to testify. I know far too well that toxic chemicals are not just "threats." They are a real part of the life and death for many Americans.

I am neither a lobbyist nor an attorney. I am a mesothelioma widow and Co-founder of the Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization (ADAO). Founded in 2004, ADAO is now the largest independent non-profit organization in the U.S. dedicated to eliminating asbestos-caused diseases.

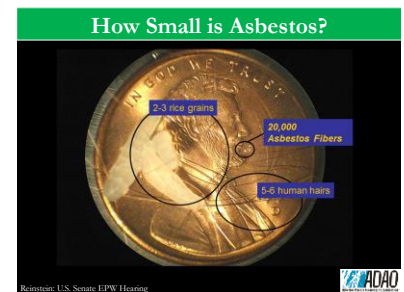
I'd like to dedicate my testimony to Janelle and Michael. Tragically, Janelle lost her life to mesothelioma at the age of 37, leaving behind her husband and 11-year-old son. Michael, a 29-year-old patient, continues to fight for his life and faces limited mesothelioma treatment options. Neither Janelle nor Michael ever worked with asbestos. It is no longer just workers being diagnosed; it's also their families: children who hugged their parents and spouses who washed their clothes.



My husband, Alan, was diagnosed with pleural mesothelioma in 2003. We had never heard of this asbestos-caused cancer, and shortly learned it was incurable. Alan chose to have an extrapleural pneumonectomy – a surgery which removed a rib and his left lung, stripped off his pericardium and surgically replaced his diaphragm. When the mesothelioma attacked Alan's remaining lung, he felt like he was breathing through a pinched straw, every breath, every minute, every day. His oxygen levels became critically low that he was tethered to supplemental oxygen to prolong his life. In 2006, Alan took his last breaths with our then 13-year-old daughter and me by his side.



Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) has failed to protect public health and our environment. Asbestos, a known human carcinogen, has caused one of the worst man-made disasters in history. The facts are irrefutable, yet, each day, 30 Americans die from preventable asbestos-caused diseases. The WHO, ILO, EPA, and our Surgeon General all agree that there is no safe level of exposure to asbestos. Asbestos fibers are odorless, tasteless, indestructible, and can be nearly 700 times smaller than a human hair.



All forms of asbestos can cause cancer and respiratory diseases, yet is still legal and lethal in the United States. Ships docked in U.S. ports still unload asbestos in the states of Louisiana, Texas, California and New Jersey just to name a few.

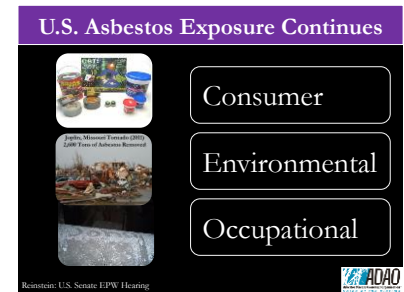
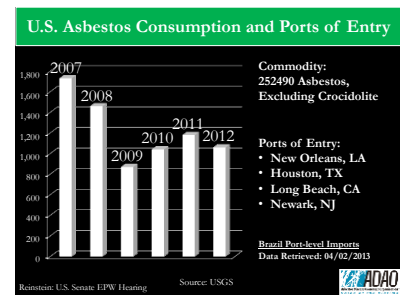
Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization is a registered 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization  
"United for Asbestos Disease Awareness, Education, Advocacy, Prevention, Support and a Cure"  
1525 Aviation Boulevard, Suite 318 · Redondo Beach · California · 90278 · 310.251.7477  
[www.AsbestosDiseaseAwareness.org](http://www.AsbestosDiseaseAwareness.org)

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) reported that we consumed 1,060 tons of asbestos in 2012. For the past two years, the chloralkali industry has increased usages, even though viable and affordable asbestos substitutes exist.

Without regulations, Americans cannot manage the risk of asbestos or other toxins. Do you know where these nearly invisible, deadly asbestos fibers are in your home, your car, on store shelves, or here on The Hill?

Consumer, environmental, and occupational exposures continue.

- In 2007, ADAO identified 5 consumer products, including a child's toy, that were contaminated with asbestos.
- It was reported that 2,600 tons of asbestos debris were removed after the Joplin, Missouri tornado and tons of toxic debris littered the coastline after Hurricane Sandy.
- Right here under the Capitol, 10 Architect of the Capitol employees were exposed to and sickened from asbestos while maintaining the tunnels. Asbestos dust was so thick that a worker was able to write his name on the pipe.

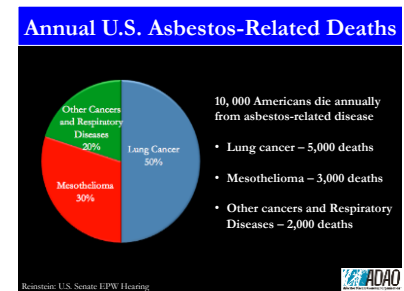


Each year, an estimated 10,000 Americans die from asbestos-related disease. For each life lost, a shattered family is left behind. Prevention is the only cure.

Americans need and deserve legislation to prevent toxic exposures, but the “Chemical Safety Improvement Act” (S. 1009) would be worse than the current law.

**CSIA is critically flawed.**

- It would be nearly impossible to phase out or ban harmful chemicals
- It lacks deadlines to ensure safety
- It would paralyze states from being able to enforce existing laws intended to protect people from chemicals.



Congress should draft and pass meaningful TSCA reform legislation that truly strengthens protections for our families and environment by preventing the further use of asbestos. One life lost to a preventable asbestos-caused disease is tragic; hundreds of thousands of lives lost is unconscionable.

I have attached a petition signed by more than 2,500 people who support a U.S. asbestos ban.