

Business and NGO Forum on Safer Chemicals Policy Reform



June 3, 2010
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Over 100 participants joined us for the Business and NGO Forum for Safer Chemicals Policy Reform in Washington, D.C. The purpose of the Forum was to:

- Hear the perspective of legislators, regulators and environmental public health advocates.
- Discuss the needs of downstream users, including the need for better data and transparency regarding chemicals in the supply chain.
- Discuss the opportunities and challenges that safer chemicals reform presents to downstream businesses, including the potential market advantage or disruption of transitioning away from chemicals of concern.
- Explore the common policy interests among downstream users of chemicals, and between businesses and NGOs.

The Forum was intended to provide a public discussion on key issues, but it was not the intent of this Forum to reach consensus on all issues; therefore not all participants were in agreement on the specific issues or positions that were discussed.

The Forum featured an overview of federal chemicals policy reform initiatives, with presentations and comments by:

- Bob Sussman, Senior Counsel to the Administrator, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- Robin Appleberry, Counsel, House Energy and Commerce Committee
- Richard Denison, Senior Scientist, Environmental Defense Fund
- Helen Holder, Corporate Material Selection Manager, Hewlett-Packard

The afternoon featured presentations on:

- “Increasing Transparency Across the Supply Chain”, by:
 - Ryan Williams, Good Cop, Method
 - Joel Sigler, Manager, Environmental, Healthy, and Safety, Eastern Region, Kaiser Permanente
 - Mary Ellen Mika, Supply Chain Management, Steelcase
- “Avoiding Chemicals of High Concern and Promoting Safer Alternatives”, by:
 - Robin Guenther, Principal, Perkins+Will
 - Howard Williams, Vice President, Construction Specialties, Inc.
 - Jeffrey Hollender, Co-founder, Seventh Generation

With closing remarks by:

- Patricia Beattie, President, Arcalis Scientific (formerly Director, Chemical Risk Management, Environmental Services, General Motors)
- Andy Igrejas, National Campaign Director, Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families

The message in the morning from both Bob Sussman and Robin Appleberry was clear, that the voice of downstream users needs to be heard in the discussions on TSCA reform. As quoted from Chemical Watch:

Downstream companies "occupy a unique position at the end of the value chain, where the rubber meets the road," Mr. Sussman told the meeting participants. "Your voice is critical. We want to encourage you to stay in the game and to help shape the end product," he said, referring to the draft documents being discussed in Congress to revise the Toxic Substances and Control Act (TSCA).

Downstream users at the meeting expressed a range of key needs from federal chemicals policy reform, including:

- **Data transparency**
 - Minimum data set within 5 years on all chemicals on the market. This data set needs to be publicly available.
 - Chemical ingredient disclosure across the supply chain.
- **Harmonization to other chemical policy initiatives**
 - For example, prioritize similar chemical classes as in Europe:
 - PBTs - persistent, bioaccumulative toxics
 - CMRs - carcinogens, mutagens and reproductive toxics - and chemicals of equivalent concern
 - vPvBs - very persistent, very bioaccumulative chemicals
- **Support safer alternatives**
 - Promote the alternatives assessment approach taken by U.S. EPA's Design for Environment program.
 - Identify chemicals that are safer (for example, "green list" of chemicals) as well as those that are of high concern.
 - Integrate safer alternatives work into the bill while avoiding paralysis by analysis.

Note that all participants in the meeting did not agree to all of these needs.

The sponsors of the Forum were:

- American Sustainable Business Council
- Business-NGO Working Group
- Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families Coalition