

May 24, 2017

Dear Members of Congress:

We, the undersigned, are a diverse group of consumer advocates, health professionals, public health advocates, worker advocates and organized labor and we ask for your support and co-sponsorship of the Cleaning Product Labeling Act of 2017, which requires the full disclosure of ingredients in institutional and household cleaning products.

The Cleaning Product Labeling Act will provide consumers and workers access to a list of ingredients on cleaning product labels - including individual ingredients in dyes, fragrances, and preservatives – and help them learn more about ingredients with which they may not be familiar. Cleaning products are defined as any product used primarily for commercial, domestic, or institutional cleaning purposes, including those used for air care, automotive care, and polishing or floor maintenance. In addition to the product label, the bill requires information to be listed on manufacturers' websites, including each ingredient's purpose in the product, and be available in English, Spanish, and any other language deemed necessary by the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). The legislation also allows the public to petition the CPSC if there is reason to believe that a cleaning product does not satisfy the labeling requirements.

We all use or come into contact with cleaning products—in our homes, workplaces, schools, and health care facilities. Yet there are currently no federal requirements to disclose the vast majority of ingredients used in these products, leaving consumers and workers powerless to avoid potentially harmful chemicals that may cause allergic reactions, asthma, and other negative health outcomes. Some cleaning product companies, such as Seventh Generation, fully disclose their ingredients on their products, including what is in their fragrances—without harm to their economic competitiveness. Some other companies, such as SC Johnson & Son, have responded to consumer pressure and become more transparent about some of the ingredients in their products. However, without a federal standard, labeling practices will remain inconsistent and many manufacturers will continue to hide some or all of their ingredients from consumers and workers. The Cleaning Product Labeling Act would fill this labeling loophole and create an industry-wide standard for listing all cleaning product ingredients.

Studies have shown that chemicals linked to health impacts such as asthma, allergies, cancer, and reproductive and developmental toxicity are found in household cleaning products, but there is currently no requirement that companies identify these dangerous chemicals on product labels or their websites. In 2011, independent lab testing of 20 top brand-name cleaning products found toxic chemicals including toluene, 1,4-dioxane, phthalates, chloroform, synthetic musks and numerous allergens.¹ Not one of these chemicals was named on the product label. A University of Washington study detected 133 different volatile organic compounds emitted from the 25 products tested, including household cleaners, air fresheners, and laundry detergents.² Twenty-four of these compounds are classified as toxic or hazardous under U.S. law, but only one was listed on the product label.

Vulnerable populations, including women, children, and workers who regularly work with cleaning products, are especially impacted by undisclosed hazardous chemical ingredients in cleaning products. About half of the nation's janitors, maids, and housekeepers are Latino or African American, and women account for 9 out of 10 maids and housekeepers.³ Workplace

exposures to cleaning products can cause or trigger work-related asthma, and women who work with cleaning products were identified as one of the occupational groups with the highest risks of asthma acquired in adulthood.^{4,5} These exposures not only affect workers, but also their children. A 2010 study found that women working as janitors and cleaners had a significantly increased risk of having children with certain birth defects.⁵

Disclosure will also assist physicians treating patients who have had adverse reactions to cleaning products. Currently, even physicians have difficulty accessing ingredient lists; and getting information directly from a company can be an onerous process, particularly in an acute medical situation.

Consumers and workers have a basic right to know what is in the products they use. This information will allow consumers to make safer choices for themselves and their families and allow workers the ability to take necessary precautions when using these products. It also will allow consumers to make proper value comparisons among products. The Cleaning Product Labeling Act will lift the veil of secrecy about the chemicals used in cleaning products. It is a common-sense proposal that we urge Members of Congress to cosponsor and Congress to pass.

Sincerely,

Alliance of Nurses for Healthy
Environments
Breast Cancer Action
Breast Cancer Prevention Partners
California Healthy Nail Salon Collaborative
Communications Workers of America
Consumers Union
Environmental Working Group
Informed Green Solutions

International Chemical Workers Union
Council
Occupational Health Clinical Centers, New
York
Pennsylvania National Organization for
Women and Ni-Ta-Nee NOW
Physicians for Social Responsibility
Sierra Club
Women's Voices for the Earth

¹ Women's Voices for the Earth "Dirty Secrets: What's Hiding in Your Cleaning Products? (November 2011). <http://www.womensvoices.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/Dirty-Secrets.pdf>. Accessed May 20, 2016.

² Steinemann, A.C., MacGregor, I.C, Gordon, S.M., Gallagher, L.G., Davis, A.L., Ribeiro, D.S., Wallace, L.A. (2011). Fragranced Consumer Products: Chemicals emitted, ingredients unlisted. *Environmental Impact Assessment Review*. 31(3): 328–333, 2011.

³ Bureau of Labor Statistics (2014). Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey. Available online: www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat11.htm. Accessed November 24, 2015.

⁴ California Department of Public Health (2012). www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/ohsep/documents/wra-cleaningprod.pdf

⁵ Lillenberg L., Andersson E., Janson C., Dahlman-Hoglund A. and Forsberg, B. (2013) Occupational Exposure and New-onset Asthma in a Population-based Study in Northern Europe (RHINE). *Annals of Occupational Hygiene*. Vol 57, No. 4, pp:482-492. 2013.

⁵ Herdt-Losavio, ML, Lin, S, Chapman, BR, Hooiveld, M, Olshan, A, Liu, X, DePersis, RD, Zhu, J, Drushel, CM (2010). Maternal Occupation and the risk of birth defects: an overview from the National Birth Defects Prevention Study. *Occupational and Environmental Medicine*. Vol. 67 (2010): 58-66.