

Senate Introduces “Safe Chemicals Act of 2013” to Protect Women’s Health

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Statement by Susannah Baruch, Interim President & CEO of the Reproductive Health Technologies Project on the introduction of the [Safe Chemicals Act of 2013](#).

“We applaud Senators Lautenberg, Gillibrand and other Senate champions for introducing the Safe Chemicals Act of 2013, real and fair reform. This important legislation recognizes that many of the products we use every day, from plastic bottles to furniture stuffing, contain untested chemicals that have been linked to a host of reproductive health impacts.

At this critical time, we need real reform to fix a broken system that hasn’t even been updated in almost 40 years, not pseudo reform promoted by the very producers of chemicals.

The burden of toxic exposure is not shared equally. While we are all exposed to toxic chemicals, low-income women and women of color are more likely to be directly exposed to toxic chemicals at work, at home, and through consumer products. Increased exposure to these chemicals means they are also more likely to experience early puberty, infertility, uterine fibroids, and other reproductive health problems that have been linked to toxic chemicals. Compounding the problem, women of color and low-income women are less likely to have access to health insurance or quality, affordable care to prevent and address health problems that may have environmental causes.

This unfortunate reality underscores the need for real and fair comprehensive chemical policy reform. Without common-sense limits on toxic chemicals, such as the Safe Chemicals Act, relief from environmental hazards in everyday products will be nearly impossible.

We hope Congress will act quickly to pass this bill.”

Background: The Safe Chemicals Act of 2013 will provide long overdue reform of the 36-year-old federal law that regulates toxic chemicals, the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA). This new legislation would give the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) stronger authority to test and regulate the 84,000 chemicals on the market today. Studies have linked exposure to many commonly used chemicals, such as bisphenol A (BPA) and phthalates, to a host of reproductive health problems including infertility, miscarriage, birth defects, early puberty in girls, low sperm counts, and breast cancer.