School of Community Health & Policy

February 18, 2010

The Honorable Henry Waxman
Chair, House Committee on Energy and Commerce
2204 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Waxman,

Thank you for taking a leading role in the current legislative efforts to strengthen our national chemical policies. Your leadership on issues related to public health is recognized and appreciated in our community. As you know, the American Public Health Association (APHA) has for many years called for reform of the Toxic Substances Control Act to better protect the public from the health impacts of toxic chemicals, and we are pleased that such efforts now appear to be moving forward.

I am writing now to encourage you to prioritize efforts to effectively protect the public from the dangers of persistent, bio-accumulative toxins (PBTs). This group of chemicals poses a particular set of challenges and risks, including health threats from very low levels of exposure and intergenerational effects. I hope that any effort to strengthen our system of addressing national chemicals will include the provision of tools to our regulatory agencies to take rapid action on PBTs. As outlined in APHA Policy #20055 (Dec 2005), PBTs are viewed as an urgent priority among public health professionals.

In addition to supporting reform of TSCA (see APHA Policy 20077; Nov, 2007), the Association has also for many years supported international efforts to address persistent organic pollutants (POPS), as outlined in APHA Policy #20009 (Jan, 2000). Inclusion of strong authority to address PBTs at home will enable the U.S. to provide leadership on POPs at the international level through the Stockholm Convention.
Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions or need more information on APHA’s position on PBTs and the current TSCA reform efforts.

Sincerely,

Andrea Kidd Taylor, DrPH, MSPH
Member, APHA Executive Board
Assistant Professor
Morgan State University
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References:
APHA Policy #20055: Protecting Human Milk from Persistent Chemical Contaminants
http://www.apha.org/advocacy/policy/policysearch/default.htm?id=1321

APHA Policy #20077: Calling on the US Congress to Restructure the Toxic Substances Control Act of 1976
http://www.apha.org/advocacy/policy/policysearch/default.htm?id=1350

APHA Policy # 20009: Support for International Action To Eliminate Persistent Organic Pollutants
http://www.apha.org/advocacy/policy/policysearch/default.htm?id=214