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EPA Administrator Jackson Indicates Obama Administration Will Support Overhaul of Nation's Toxic Chemical Law

Environment and Health Advocates Look to Congress for Next Steps

SAN FRANCISCO – In a signal that the EPA has entered a new era, Administrator Lisa Jackson said the time had come to strengthen EPA's authority to regulate toxic chemicals, which are ubiquitous in the environment and human bodies.

Jackson identified chemical management reform as one of her top priorities, and stated the administration's guiding principles for overhauling the nation's toxic chemical law, the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA). Legislation to reform TSCA is expected to be introduced in Congress this fall by Senator Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) and Representative Bobby Rush (D-IL).

Jackson said the 1976 law currently on the books has fallen behind the industry it was intended to regulate and that her agency needs better tools to protect Americans from toxic chemicals. She added the time is absolutely right for Congress to take the next step, passing a law to protect Americans from toxic chemicals.

"The chorus of voices calling for reform of our nation's chemical regulations now includes the Obama administration, health professionals, environmental advocates, the states, and even industry," said **Earthjustice President Trip Van Noppen**. "Now we look to Congress to join the fight to protect our children and our environment from dangerous chemicals."

"The Obama Administration is in sync with a public demanding safer chemicals and better information they can use to protect their families from toxic chemicals," said **Andy Igrejas, National Campaign Director for Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families**.

The principles Jackson outlined to guide Congress in creating new legislation include:

- ❑ Chemicals must pass muster under a safety standard that protects human health and the environment;
- ❑ Responsibility for providing data rests with the chemical industry, not taxpayers;
- ❑ EPA must have clear authority to take quick action to restrict use of chemicals that violate the safety standard;
- ❑ Manufacturers and EPA should assess and act on priority chemicals, both existing and new, in a timely manner
- ❑ Vulnerable populations, especially children, must be given special consideration when setting safety standards;
- ❑ Green chemistry, which will lead to safer chemicals, should be encouraged and the public's right to know about chemicals must be ensured;

- The EPA should be given a sustained source of funding for implementation and the chemical industry must pay its fair share to implement the new standards.

Jackson was also clear that the legislation must give the EPA authority to take action quickly. Since TSCA was passed 33 years ago, the EPA has only required testing on about 200 chemicals. Currently more than 80,000 chemicals are used and produced in commerce.

The federal system for regulating chemicals hasn't changed since TSCA was passed in 1976. TSCA, which was intended to give the EPA the power to regulate chemicals, historically has been ineffective. An example: EPA spent ten years and tens of millions of dollars to restrict the toxic chemical asbestos 18 years ago. The chemical industry sued and a court ruled that the EPA failed to meet the requirements set forth under TSCA. The EPA has never again tried to regulate a chemical's production or use.

For a copy of the EPA's Framework for Chemical Management Reform, go to <http://yosemite.epa.gov/opa/admpress.nsf/0/D07993FDCF801C2285257640005D27A6>

For more information, go to www.saferchemicals.org.

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