



LEGISLATIVE ALERT

January 21, 2026

Dear Chairman Palmer, Ranking Member Tonko, and members of the Subcommittee,

On behalf of the AFL-CIO, a federation of 64 affiliate unions representing 15 million working people across our economy, in light of the upcoming January 22, 2026 subcommittee hearing on chemical safety, I urge you to wholly reject the draft discussion bill that would weaken the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA). Simply put, this proposal would put American workers, their children, spouses and neighbors in danger.

This proposal is not only dangerous, it is unnecessary. It allows the chemical industry to erode the bipartisan agreement to modernize TSCA made only nine years ago. The 2016 amendments aimed to strengthen chemical protections for American workers and their families, pregnant women, children, elderly and other vulnerable groups named in the law. Thanks to TSCA, the U.S. has finally been able to start phasing out asbestos and other dangerous chemicals on the market that have safer substitutes.

The new draft legislation puts profit over people. It would shield the chemical industry from obligations to submit adequate safety data to the government; to undergo adequate review of toxicity data for chemicals—both existing and new chemicals to the market—; and to install engineering technologies that reduce chemicals in the air and on surfaces to levels protective of worker health. Preventing workplace health and safety hazards requires adequate planning; yet, this proposal removes responsibility from chemical companies to address “reasonably foreseen” exposures and risks, and allows them to prematurely find no “unreasonable risk” before EPA has performed any evaluation whatsoever.

Importantly for workers, this proposal would allow EPA to rely on faulty assumptions about existing chemical protections from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and erase the gap-filling measures TSCA was specifically amended in 2016 to address. OSHA has acknowledged its limits are unprotective, has not issued a chemical regulation since 2017, and prohibits the total reliance on PPE. Additionally, the chemical industry has not historically looked to invigorate OSHA’s standard setting process or increase its resources.

The health and safety of entire working families is at stake. Occupational chemical exposures cause medically incurable and costly disease. Workplace exposures affect family members. For example, children are especially susceptible to take-home exposures from toxic

dusts and other chemicals, and many workers and their families live near the same facilities that can pollute their lungs both inside and outside the workplace.

This draft legislation would make work less safe. We urge Congress to wholly reject this attempt to ease the safety obligations of giant corporations at the expense of working families and their long-term health.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jody Calemine". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jody Calemine
Director, Government Affairs