

February 3, 2011

Dear Senator Lautenberg:

As people of faith we are taught that all humankind is made in the image of God and receives nourishment from the bounty of God's Creation (Genesis 1:26). Therefore, caring for our own bodies is an essential aspect of our call to honor God's Creation (1 Corinthians 6:19; Genesis 2:15). We are also taught to care for and seek justice for vulnerable populations such as children, women, and those living in poverty.

These values are challenged by the fact that toxic chemicals enter and harm our bodies through air and water pollution, and chemicals in household products including cleaners, electronics, textiles, and children's toys. Some contaminants can cause health problems ranging from asthma to cancer, especially in children. Of particular concern is the fact that some populations are more vulnerable to health concerns related to toxic chemicals—children, newborns, women, the elderly, and communities of color.

Yet, these chemicals are poorly understood and inadequately regulated. The U.S. Government Accountability Office found that only 200 of the more than 83,000 registered industrial chemicals have been tested. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) cannot do this alone. Chemical companies should practice good moral stewardship by providing critical data necessary to determine chemical safety. The current system does not effectively ensure chemical safety.

As people of faith from diverse traditions, we affirm that reforming current chemical policies is vital to protecting people and life on God's Earth. We urge Congress to take immediate action to update our nation's chemical policy that will ensure the safety of both existing and new toxic chemicals so that we can protect vulnerable populations such as children, women, the elderly, and communities of color from the negative health impacts of toxic chemicals.

Sincerely,

Episcopal Church USA  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
National Council of Churches USA  
Presbyterian Church USA  
Union for Reform Judaism  
United Church of Christ  
The United Methodist Church - General Board of Church and Society