

President Obama Signs Lautenberg Chemical Safety Act Protecting Public Health, Animals

Law Enables EPA to Prioritize Human-Relevant Chemical Tests Over Animal Experiments



WASHINGTON—The Physicians Committee—a nonprofit with 12,000 doctor members—applauds President Barack Obama for signing the Frank R. Lautenberg Chemical Safety for the 21st Century Act into law today. The law, which updates the Toxic Substances Control Act of 1976, integrates principles to replace and reduce animal-based tests with human-relevant methods to assess the toxicity of chemicals.

It requires alternatives to animal tests be considered and used, and places restrictions on animal testing—which are stronger than current law—that will over time facilitate the development and adoption of human-relevant, nonanimal methods. Because information obtained on chemicals will be human-relevant, products Americans use will be safer.

“Chemicals that are potentially dangerous will be easier to identify thanks to the Lautenberg Act’s encouragement of alternatives—like in vitro and in silico methods—and tiered testing strategies,” says Kristie Sullivan, M.P.H., vice president of research policy at the Physicians Committee. “The EPA has already used this approach successfully to identify potentially estrogenic chemicals in our environment.”

The Physicians Committee has worked to educate Congress on the importance of fixing the way we test chemicals since 2007, when the National Academies of Sciences released the groundbreaking report *Toxicity Testing in the 21st Century: A Vision and a Strategy*. This report called for modernizing the toxicity testing and assessment of chemicals using nonanimal approaches.

“Science and technology has progressed so much in the last 10 years that we have begun to transition to some of the test methods recommended in *Toxicity Testing in the 21st Century*,” says Sullivan. “The Lautenberg Act now provides the resources and incentives to ultimately realize this vision.”

The policies in this law—supported by a broad coalition of stakeholders and legislators—will ensure strong protection of human health and the environment by modernizing toxicity test methods, allowing the EPA to collect better information more quickly than current tests allow.

“We thank Sen. Tom Udall for introducing the Senate version of the Lautenberg Act, Sen. Cory Booker for taking a leadership role in negotiating the testing provisions, and for the support of Sens. David Vitter and Jim Inhofe,” says Sullivan. And we thank President Obama for signing the Lautenberg Act into law today.”

Founded in 1985, the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine is a nonprofit health organization that promotes preventive medicine, conducts clinical research, and encourages higher standards for ethics and effectiveness in research.