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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BIPARTISAN, 63-MEMBER HOUSE GROUP ASKS HHS SECRETARY TO DEFER *REPORT ON CARCINOGENS* LISTING OF STYRENE

WASHINGTON (May 17, 2011) – Sixty-three members of the U.S. House of Representatives have called on the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) to delay a proposed listing of styrene in HHS's impending *Report on Carcinogens* (*RoC*) until a "thorough review can be conducted that weighs the full body of scientific evidence available to decision makers," the Styrene Information and Research Center (SIRC) said today.

The request came in the form of a bipartisan letter[1] – co-sponsored by Reps. Jason Altmire (D-Pa.) and Joe Wilson (R-S.C.) – to HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius that points out serious shortcomings in the *RoC* styrene review conducted by HHS's National Toxicology Program (NTP). Deficiencies cited in the letter, which is signed by 47 Republicans and 16 Democrats, include lack of proper peer review and response to public comments, failure to inform agency review panels of critical scientific controversies, and failure to consider all relevant scientific information.

The NTP proposed in 2008 to list styrene in its next *RoC* as "reasonably anticipated to be a human carcinogen" despite the fact that European Union regulators, a panel of internationally recognized epidemiologists, and a Harvard Center for Risk Analysis study have determined that styrene does not represent a human cancer concern.

The House members wrote: "The production of styrene and styrene-based products accounts for up to 750,000 jobs across the nation in virtually every state and congressional district… If the NTP's 12th *RoC* goes forward as drafted, thousands of Americans working in the styrene-based products industry will face job uncertainty and potentially even job loss. NTP's disclaimer that it has no opinion about actual health risk regarding the substances listed in the *RoC* will almost certainly not counteract the plain language meaning of the phrase 'reasonably anticipated carcinogen'."

Styrene-based materials, including polystyrene, ABS (acrylonitrile butadiene styrene), styrene-butadiene rubber, styrene-butadiene latex and styrene composites are used to make a wide variety of products that extend the life of transportation infrastructure, increase fuel economy, protect our troops, produce "green" energy, increase consumer safety, prevent pollution, save lives, and improve sports.

(more)

[1] The letter may be found in the "Newsroom" at the Styrene Information and Research Center Web site, www.styrene.org.

"Styrene helps form the fabric of American life and the science says it is safe," said SIRC Executive Director Jack Snyder. "Many manufacturing facilities that depend on styrene are located in communities that can ill-afford further economic disruption and job loss. We applaud the bipartisan congressional coalition for pointing these realities out to the Administration. We hope that the HHS Secretary takes them to heart in reaching a decision."

The House members' letter added: "…Occupational Safety and Health Administration warning regulations will commence sixty days after the release of the *RoC*. The resulting climate will make styrene-based businesses much more difficult to operate in the United States. We strongly urge you to seek a more thorough review of the available knowledge on styrene before taking any action that ignores a large volume of strong science and significantly hinders American job growth."

SIRC leads a styrene industry coalition that has protested the *RoC* listing vigorously with federal officials since it was proposed three years ago. The coalition seeks a deferral of styrene from the impending (12th) *RoC* and a re-review using a more scientifically rigorous and transparent process for the subsequent (13th) *RoC*. Other coalition members include the American Composites Manufacturers Association, National Marine Manufacturers Association, and the Plastics Foodservice Packaging Group of the American Chemistry Council.

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