

Committee on Energy and Commerce

**Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Full Committee Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr.**

Hearing on “Chemicals in Commerce: Legislative Proposal to Modernize America's Chemical Safety Law, Strengthen Critical Supply Chains, and Grow Domestic Manufacturing”

January 22, 2026

Today Committee Republicans continue their assault on the health and well-being of the American people. We will be discussing a Republican discussion draft that would significantly weaken our nation’s chemical safety law, and leave families, children, and workers exposed to toxic chemicals.

The Toxic Substances Control Act gives the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) the authority and responsibility to examine and restrict chemicals that pose an unreasonable risk to human health and the environment. The original law, however, fell far short of that goal. For far too long, too many communities have carried the burden of toxic exposures. That was made clear during our December PFAS hearing, when Emily Donovan delivered the stories of friends and loved ones lost too soon because of the unchecked actions of chemical companies.

That is why – after years of tough negotiations – Congress passed the Frank R. Lautenberg Chemical Safety for the 21st Century Act in 2016 with strong bipartisan support. The bill was named after New Jersey’s late Senator Lautenberg – a longtime friend of mine and a lifetime environmental champion.

The Lautenberg Act updated and modernized TSCA for the first time in 40 years, finally providing EPA the tools to safeguard Americans by addressing harmful substances. Since its passage, I have worked to ensure it lives up to its namesake’s commitment to protect Americans, particularly children, pregnant women, workers, and frontline communities.

So it is shocking to me that this draft is before us today because this has always been a bipartisan effort. But the draft before us today does not live up to the Lautenberg legacy. It fundamentally alters the TSCA program to appease industry stakeholders at the expense of public health and safety. The discussion draft would prevent EPA from meaningfully reviewing new and existing chemicals in order to protect workers, families, and children from unreasonable risks. It would hamper EPA’s ability to require chemical testing, leaving regulators in the dark about the harms posed by chemical substances and exposing Americans to toxic chemicals in their homes and workplaces. These are only some of the serious concerns I have with the discussion draft.

My Republican colleagues will claim this draft modernizes TSCA and promotes innovation, but in reality, it decimates critical protections and signals to communities – like Emily Donovan’s – that it’s acceptable for them to face the threats of cancer, infertility, neurological harm, and other serious risks, so long as industry gets their chemicals to market.

I fully acknowledge that EPA’s TSCA Office has faced its fair share of implementation challenges. One complaint we’ve heard is that new chemical reviews are facing delays. But we cannot ignore the fact that the chemical industry has a hand in these delays.. It is clear to me that the first step to

addressing TSCA delays is to ensure the office has the adequate resources to fulfill its mission. Undermining health protections from toxic chemicals and leaving Americans exposed to harm – as the discussion draft proposes – would do nothing to address EPA’s TSCA implementation challenges.

My Republican colleagues will also claim these changes are targeted, but I fundamentally disagree. The discussion draft proposes to make foundational changes to the law that deserve feedback and scrutiny from stakeholders across sectors. EPA should be called to provide testimony on these amendments as well. Changes of this magnitude to TSCA deserve more than just one hearing so members can scrutinize the language and its impacts.

Time and again, we see how vulnerable communities bear the brunt of weak chemical safety protections. We’ve heard the tragic stories of Americans gone too soon because of lax – or nonexistent – chemical regulations. And we fought hard to make meaningful improvements to a broken law with the Lautenberg Act ten years ago. We cannot afford to go back.

In fact, we should be working to strengthen TSCA to ensure we protect the health of all Americans – especially our most vulnerable – while at the same time fostering innovation. This discussion draft, unfortunately, is heading in the wrong direction.

Thank you, and I yield back the balance of my time.