

It's time for Congress to set common sense limits on toxic chemicals.



Stronger chemical laws will help businesses restore consumer faith in the American market, plus make our families safer and healthier. Businesses and manufacturers are demanding federal change. For the first time in decades, there is a real opportunity to fix the problem at its source, and to rebuild our economy based on safer chemical regulations.



SAFER PRODUCTS LEAD TO BETTER BUSINESS FOR NORTH CAROLINA

Leading companies from furniture manufacturers to health care providers are motivated to identify and use safer alternatives to toxic chemicals.

Today's business leaders are concerned about the economic and health impacts that could arise if the products they use or sell contain toxic chemicals. Leaders recognize that by using safer chemicals, they are protecting human and environmental health, and cutting the costs of regulation, worker protection and future liabilities. Taking the necessary steps to developing safe chemical guidelines will position North Carolina as a more competitive entity in a global marketplace, and create new jobs.

CONSUMERS ARE DEMANDING SAFER PRODUCTS

The uncertainty surrounding the safety of chemicals is eroding consumer confidence in a wide range of products. Every week, new scientific research links exposure to chemicals commonly found in products to the increasing incidence of serious chronic health problems, including asthma, childhood cancers, infertility, and learning and developmental disabilities. Yet the main federal law that is supposed to protect Americans from toxic chemicals is not doing its job.

The Toxic Substances Control Act of 1976 — intended to give the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency the power to identify and regulate dangerous chemicals — is outdated

and simply does not work. Congress has yet to take meaningful action, and the Chemical Safety Improvement Act currently proposed in the US Senate would not solve this problem as currently written.

LACK OF CHEMICAL REGULATION IS HAMSTRINGING BUSINESSES

International governments are increasing scrutiny of chemicals. As both global and domestic markets respond, North Carolina companies are positioning themselves ahead of the curve. Competitiveness in a global marketplace depends on the ability to respond to increasing consumer awareness and demand for safer products.



Keeping suppliers in check

Leading North Carolina businesses are changing how they use chemicals

Businesses can thrive by making the commitment to use safer, less toxic ingredients in their products. More companies are choosing to use better options for their customers and the environment:

- Selling safer products in retail boutiques.
- Manufacturing products using safer ingredient alternatives.
- Requiring suppliers to adhere to higher standards.

On our website, read the full profiles of each business benefitting from safer chemical usage:

bit.ly/saferproductsNC

LEE INDUSTRIES

Even for large organizations, it can be difficult to get useful chemical hazard information from suppliers. Fulfilling this request typically requires extensive vendor education, and persistent demands for hazard and ingredient information.

“It does require additional resources. We sent a team of engineers to the Business + Institutional Furniture Manufacturers Summit to stay up-to-date, and learn how to keep suppliers in check,” states Norman Coley, President of Lee Industries. But he also knows that the payback is worth it. “There’s a customer segment that has a high level of concern for health and the environment, and they seek us out.”

Lee Industries developed a supplier code of conduct that tasks suppliers to know exactly which chemicals they’re using. Coley says he has developed a list of most toxic chemicals, and won’t work with a supplier if they use any on the list.

Headquarters: Newton, NC

Products: Indoor and outdoor furniture, upholstery, rugs and accents.

Noteworthy: Lee Industries is a family-owned furniture company manufacturing all its products in Newton, NC for over 40 years. They are known as a leader in sustainability.

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Consumers are demanding safety

Third party verification

CAROLINA MATTRESS GUILD

Carolina Mattress Guild's Marketing Coordinator Hillary Pope says a fire in the facility in 2000 led to producing innovative fire retardants for their mattresses. However, it was consumer demand that really spurred the change.

CMG is family-owned and operated, and believes a mattress is personal. "We don't create anything we wouldn't sleep on ourselves," says Pope. She adds, "The best part is our products are not much more expensive to produce using safer chemicals, so the consumer doesn't pay a premium."

Sustainability is more than just a marketing claim; Carolina Mattress Guild became a member of the Sustainable Furnishings Council in December 2012.

Headquarters: Thomasville, NC

Products: Bedding and accessories including pillows, pillowcases, innerspring, foam, gel, memory foam, and latex core beds, all made in Thomasville, NC and Orlando, FL.

Noteworthy: Carolina Mattress Guild launched its popular and eco-friendly Nature's Image and Natural Living lines in 2009, providing beds with natural ingredients including natural bamboo, organic cotton, wool, silk, hybrid soy foams, and natural rubber latex.

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SUSTAINABLE FURNISHINGS COUNCIL

Susan Inglis, Executive Director of the Sustainable Furnishings Council (SFC), a nonprofit organization focused on promoting sustainable practices among manufacturers, retailers and consumers, believes that every industry should ask questions and be persistent.

SFC has the resources members need to start asking questions and find out which chemicals suppliers are using, or to know whether safer ingredients are available.

"Using safer ingredients builds brand loyalty, and makes the company look a lot better to potential customers."

Headquarters: Edenton, NC

Products: Resources, education and support for furniture manufacturers across the US committed to sustainability.

Noteworthy: The SFC has grown to over 400 members since its founding at the High Point Furniture Market in 2006.

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Reform is needed NOW to support North Carolina manufacturing

In rebuilding and strengthening the U.S. economy, many businesses are calling for a new chemicals policy that limits the use of toxic chemicals, and prioritizes green chemicals and engineering.

Policy reforms will support these efforts, have a positive impact on business and manufacturing, and will spur market transitions to a healthier economy and environment. Overhauling our nation's outdated chemical laws can support American business in many ways:



COST SAVINGS

- Reduced costs and risks of regulation, hazardous waste disposal, worker protections and potential liabilities.
- Reducing the costs and risks, especially product liability associated with managing toxic chemicals in products across supply chains.
- Lower expenses from chemically induced employee illness, and enhanced productivity from improved employee health.
- Improved transparency and communication throughout the supply chain, leading to increased confidence for downstream users, and reduced risks from supply chain interruptions.

INCREASED GLOBAL COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

- Expanding markets for safer and greener products.
- Creating a more competitive, innovative and economically sustainable chemical industry.
- Competitive advantage and long-lasting customer loyalty.
- Leveling the playing field, by requiring existing chemicals meet the same testing requirements as new chemicals, and creating a more predictable regulatory system.

INCREASED CONSUMER CONFIDENCE

- Increased trust among consumers, employees, communities and investors.
- Improved employee morale from feeling good about working for a company that cares about people and the environment.
- Identifying the presence of chemicals of high concern in products.



For more information, visit:

NC Sustainable Furnishings Council
sustainablefurnishings.org

Toxic Free NC
toxicfreenc.org