



BE SAFE

Precautionary Action to Protect Our Health & Environment

BE SAFE is a nationwide initiative to prevent hazardous exposures through the “better safe than sorry” precautionary approach. The Center for Health, Environment & Justice (CHEJ) is spearheading this campaign in coalition with hundreds of groups and individuals to build a unified demand for preventive, protective policies in America.

BE SAFE Platform

In the 21st century, we envision a world in which our food, water and air are clean, and our children grow up healthy and thrive. Everyone needs a protected, safe community and workplace, and natural environment to enjoy. We can make this world vision a reality. The tools we bring to this work are prevention, safety, responsibility and democracy.

Our goal is to prevent pollution and environmental destruction before it happens. This precautionary approach because it is preventive medicine for our environment and health.

It makes sense to:

Prevent pollution and make polluters, not taxpayers, pay and assume responsibility for the damage they cause; Protect our children from chemical and radioactive exposures to avoid illness and suffering; Promote use of safe, renewable, non-toxic technologies; and Provide a natural environment we can all enjoy with clean air, swimmable, fishable waters, and stewardship for our national forests.

HEED EARLY WARNINGS

Government and industry have a duty to prevent harm, when there is credible evidence that harm is occurring or is likely to occur — even when the exact nature and full magnitude of harm is not yet proven.

PUT SAFETY FIRST

Industry and government have a responsibility to thoroughly study the potential for harm from a new chemical or technology before it is used — rather than assume it is harmless until proven otherwise. We need to ensure it is safe now, or we will be sorry later. Research on impacts to workers and the public needs to be confirmed by independent third parties.

EXERCISE DEMOCRACY

Precautionary decisions place the highest priority on protecting health and the environment, and help develop

cleaner technologies and industries with effective safeguards and enforcement. Government and industry decisions should be based on meaningful citizen input and mutual respect (the golden rule), with the highest regard for those whose health may be affected and for our irreplaceable natural resources – not for those with financial interests. Uncompromised science should inform public policy.

CHOOSE THE SAFEST SOLUTION

Decision-making by government, industry and individuals must include an evaluation of alternatives, and the choice of the safest, technically feasible solutions. We support innovation and promotion of technologies and solutions that create a healthy environment and economy, and protect our natural resources.

BE SAFE Platform Endorsement Coupon

- Yes**, I endorse the BE SAFE Platform.
- Yes**, our organization endorses the Platform.

Name: _____

Group (if any): _____

Street Address: _____

City/State/Zipcode: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Would you like to:

- Receive Email Activity Updates
- Participate in Events in Your Region
- Hold a House Party
- Make a Donation: Tax-deductible donations of \$35, \$50 or \$100 for educational activities would be greatly appreciated. (Checks payable to CHEJ.)

You can also email endorsements to: **besafe@chej.org** or visit **www.besafenet.com**

BE SAFE, c/o CHEJ, P.O. Box 6806, Falls Church, VA 22040-6806 Voice:703-237-2249 Fax:703-237-8389

The BE SAFE Initiative is about protection, caution and responsible actions that safeguard human health and the environment.

People's bodies are being contaminated with industrial chemicals without their consent or knowledge. Unlike food and drugs, most of these industrial chemicals have never been tested to determine their effects on human health or the environment. Diseases linked to involuntary exposures to chemicals, like childhood cancers, are on the rise.

Our laws need to be changed to protect public health and the environment. We must phase out the worst chemicals and switch to safer, effective and affordable alternatives that already exist.

Because our country's laws are outdated—prevention, substitution and proof of safety—are not our nation's goals. Instead calculated harm and sacrifice are the goals of today's regulations and laws. Risk of harm and the cost of change (regardless of how large or small) dominate decisions around chemical exposures of innocent people—unborn babies and the environment. Below is a simple analogy to demonstrate the problem.

Protective Gates vs. Cheap Pillows



Most people believe if you have a toddler and an open staircase it makes sense to be cautious and place a gate across the stairs to prevent the child from falling.

U.S. chemical industries would argue investing in the gate may not be necessary—instead they would do studies to determine how many toddlers would fall and the level of harm from each tumble down the stairs.

After finding toddlers would likely fall down the stairs and could be harmed, industry would still argue the *gate is too much money*. Instead, they would suggest inexpensive pillows at the bottom of the stairs are ample protection.

BE SAFE was launched to promote precautionary policies or “gates across the stairs.”

The precautionary approach shifts the questions we ask about environmental hazards from “what level of harm is acceptable?” to “how can we prevent harm?”

Who Supports BE SAFE? Hundreds of groups have endorsed the BE SAFE Platform (see website for list), including the Learning Disabilities Association, Children's Health Environmental Coalition, Sierra Club, Councils on Occupational Safety & Health, Physician and Breast Cancer groups.

Tell government and industry to prevent hazardous exposures with the BE SAFE precautionary approach by supporting the BE SAFE Platform.

Sign on to the *BE SAFE Precautionary Platform*. (See other side.) Be counted when we deliver this national Platform to the White House in 2005.

Join with thousands of Americans in supporting a “better safe than sorry” precautionary approach to protect our health and environment.