

Statement of Senator Max Baucus

November 17, 2011

Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works Joint Legislative Hearing

S. 847, the Safe Chemicals Act of 2011

Chairman Lautenberg, thank you for holding this important hearing today on S. 847, the Safe Chemicals Act of 2011.

The Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) needs to be reformed. There is a broad consensus that it is outdated. And this bill is an appropriate starting point for that effort.

I have heard many times in recent years from Montanans who are passionate about improving chemical safety. Parents from across Montana, and mothers in particular, are worried about the products that surround their children. Montanans who suffer acute chemical sensitivity would lead better lives with a more transparent system. And I never forget the many Montanans touched by the nightmare of the asbestos contamination of the town of Libby, Montana—and the clear failure of TSCA to address the toxicity of asbestos.

TSCA is not adequately protecting Americans, and it is our obligation to fix it. Congress should give EPA better tools to keep our families safe, including strong up-front requirements for obtaining data about chemicals and the ability to prioritize the risk of different chemicals.

Looking forward, the more we can do to promote green chemistry innovation, the more new jobs we will create, technology we will export, and families we will keep safe. Rivertop Renewables in Missoula, Montana, is a perfect example of this kind of innovation. A balanced bill ought to ensure that homegrown companies like Rivertop can continue to lead the chemical industry.

Thank you again for your hard work in crafting this bill and keeping the process inclusive. I look forward to working with you toward an agreement in this committee.