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Contact: Katie Sulau, [734-222-9650](tel:734-222-9650) or katie@michiganlcv.org

Contact: Rebecca Meuninck, [734-369-9278](tel:734-369-9278) or rebecca@ecocenter.org

B-roll and high-resolution photos available upon request

Michigan Coalition Puts Toxic Chemical Reform Top on Congress's To Do List

Health advocates flock DC for National Stroller Brigade for Safer Chemicals

WASHINGTON DC --- A coalition of environmental and public health advocates are meeting with members of Michigan's congressional delegation today to call for much-needed updates to federal chemical safety laws, which have not changed in almost 40 years. Advocates hail from the Michigan League of Conservation Voters, the Ecology Center, Moms Clean Air Force, C.S. Mott Children's Hospital, and the Learning Disabilities Association of Michigan.

"Chemicals like mercury, bisphenol-A and flame retardants are found in everyday products, and now they are seeping into the Great Lakes. They are contaminating our freshwater and the fish we eat," said Erica Bloom, Program Manager for Michigan LCV. "Elected officials in D.C. are overdue to take a stand for Michigan's freshwater, and pass laws that better protect our lakes and aquatic wildlife."

The Michigan advocates joined hundreds of other advocates for the National Stroller Brigade for Safer Chemicals in Washington DC. The Brigade was organized to draw attention to the fact that our nation's 37-year-old chemicals law the Toxic Substance Control Act (TSCA) is woefully out of date and overdue for reform. The Michigan coalition represents a growing movement of nurses, parents, clean water advocates and business leaders who know TSCA is ineffective at protecting public health and the environment from hazardous chemicals.

"Chemicals linked to asthma, certain cancers, and learning disabilities are found in everything from household cleaners and children's products, and very few have been tested for safety," said Wibke Heymach, Michigan Field Manager for Moms Clean Air Force. "Congress has an opportunity to pass laws that protect Michigan's families and freshwater, and we are calling on them to do so."

Since TSCA was enacted in 1976, more than 80,000 chemicals have registered for use in the USA. The EPA has required very few to be tested for their impact on health, and has only succeeded in banning or restricting five chemical substances. Many chemicals on the market have been linked to diseases like cancer, birth defects, infertility, and asthma. These chemicals are ubiquitous in Great Lakes fish and

wildlife, and biomonitoring has detected them in Michigan residents.

"In my 16 years as a Pediatric Intensive Care Unit nurse, and as a mother of twin boys, I know firsthand the fragility of our health," said Racheal Brant, one of three nurses in the Michigan coalition from C.S. Mott Children's Hospital. "Every day I see children fighting cancer, battling chronic disabilities and struggling to regain their health. Toxic chemicals threaten the health of my young patients and all of our families. I urge our Senators to enact strong legislation that truly protects our most vulnerable."

The Michigan team will speak to Senators Levin and Stabenow about the Chemical Safety Improvement Act (CSIA), a bill that the public health and environmental community say is too weak. Jennifer Canvasser, mother and organizer for the Ecology Center, states, "we are calling for federal reform that will protect pregnant women, children and vulnerable communities, take immediate action on the most toxic chemicals, and allow states the ability to continue to pass chemicals laws to protect their own citizens and environment."

The CSIA, as drafted, doesn't meet these important health criteria.

Live coverage of the National Stroller Brigade for Safer Chemicals can be viewed at 10am EST at <http://www.saferchemicals.org/strollerbrigade>

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Michigan League of Conservation Voters is Michigan's leading non-partisan political voice for land, air and water. Visit our website: <http://www.michiganlcv.org>. Follow Michigan LCV on Twitter @MichiganLCV or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/michiganlcv.

Moms Clean Air Force is a national movement of moms and dads who are protecting children's rights to clean air. Visit our website: <http://www.momscleanairforce.org>. Contact Wibke Heymach at wibke@michiganlcv.org.

The Ecology Center is a membership-based, nonprofit environmental organization. Visit our website: <http://www.ecocenter.org>. Contact Rebecca Meuninck at: rebecca@ecocenter.org.