

AFL-CIO

LEGISLATIVE ALERT

November 18, 2019

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the AFL-CIO, I urge you to support the Alan Reinstein Ban Asbestos Now (ARBAN) Act of 2019 (H.R. 1603), which will be marked up by the Energy and Commerce Committee on November 19, 2019. This legislation protects working people by banning all imports and uses of asbestos, launching a “Right to Know” program, and evaluating the risks of asbestos already in-place throughout our nation.

Asbestos exposure affects all sectors of our workforce, including fire fighters, construction workers, teachers, utility workers, health care workers, and all those who work and live in buildings where asbestos was installed decades ago. As our nation’s infrastructure degrades due to age and weathering, working people and the public are put at risk. Previously installed asbestos -- or so-called legacy asbestos -- is especially problematic because it exposes workers to friable asbestos, causing chronic, progressive, debilitating diseases.

Each year, an estimated 40,000 Americans die from asbestos-related cancers and respiratory disease. The World Health Organization has declared that there is no safe level of asbestos, and that the most effective way to prevent asbestos-related disease is to ban all types of asbestos.

In 2016, Congress passed the landmark Frank R. Lautenberg Chemical Safety for the 21st Century Act, granting the Environmental Protection Agency the authority to ban asbestos. Despite this authority, The Trump Administration's EPA has refused to address any of the risks associated with exposure to asbestos. Section 3 of H.R. 1603 mandates a new assessment of exposures and risks caused by asbestos installed decades ago. The last time the government performed an assessment of in-place asbestos was in the 1980s.

Working people have the right to a safe job, including protections from toxic substances. A ban of asbestos and an assessment of the risks of in-place asbestos are crucial to their health and wellbeing. We strongly urge you to protect working people from the hazards of asbestos by supporting H.R. 1603.

Sincerely,



William Samuel, Director
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American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations

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