



June 16, 2020

Via electronic mail

The Honorable Roger Wicker
Chairman
Committee on Commerce, Science,
and Transportation
United States Senate
555 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Ranking Member
Committee, on Commerce, Science
and Transportation
United States Senate
511 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: National PFAS Contamination Coalition OPPOSES Nancy Beck Nomination To Chair
Consumer Product Safety Commission

Dear Chairman Wicker and Ranking Member Cantwell:

We, the undersigned community group leaders, are writing to express our strong opposition to the nomination of Nancy Beck to Chair the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). We are members of the National PFAS Contamination Coalition¹. Our membership represents over 30 grassroots community groups in 21 states fighting PFAS chemical pollution in our air, soil, water, food, and from occupational exposures.

For decades, many residents in our communities have been overexposed to PFAS chemicals. We call PFAS “forever chemicals” because that’s what they do--they live forever, never breaking down. This dangerous forever chemistry bioaccumulates in our bodies² and in our environment.

For too long, the health and safety of our families have been disregarded. We are seeing major diseases and illnesses in people far too young in our communities. Many in our group have visited Congress on numerous occasions testifying about our personal heartaches, our illnesses, and our fears because of these forever chemical exposures.

¹ <https://pfasproject.net/>

² Calafat, A. M., Wong, L. Y., Kuklennyik, Z., Reidy, J. A., & Needham, L. L. (2007). Polyfluoroalkyl Chemicals in the U.S. Population: Data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) 2003–2004 and Comparisons with NHANES 1999–2000. *Environmental Health Perspectives*, 115(11), 1596–1602, <https://doi.org/10.1289/ehp.10598>.

As you know, the CPSC is the federal agency responsible for protecting the public against dangers associated with consumer products including toys, children's products, home furnishings, cleaning supplies, cookware, and some tools and building materials. We rely on this agency to protect our health and our children's health from unnecessary toxic exposures. That's why it concerned us to learn Nancy Beck is best known for her long career of opposing health protections from dangerous toxic chemicals, including her time as an official for the largest trade association of chemical manufacturers. For the past three years, Beck has headed EPA's "Chemical Safety" office, and she is currently leading the Trump administration's policies on PFAS.

As organizations and individuals whose families and communities have been directly harmed by PFAS chemicals in our drinking water, food supply, the very air we breathe, occupational exposures and consumer products, we judge her suitability as a nominee by her record of action (or inaction) to address the nation's burgeoning PFAS contamination crisis. Unfortunately, her record is one of failure rather than one of action and urgency.

While directing EPA's Chemical Safety office, Nancy Beck has failed to use her authority to address PFAS contamination, and she has undermined efforts to strengthen protections from these harmful toxic chemicals.

- Nancy Beck's first actions after arriving at EPA were to rewrite rules under the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) to prevent consideration of the harm caused by PFAS in drinking water or polluted air^{3 4}.
- Beck never required chemical manufacturers to disclose information about PFAS, including how much was produced, how and where it was disposed of, and how many workers and people were exposed. Finally, Congress stepped in and ordered the EPA to gather the information.
- Beck never required industry dischargers to report their releases of PFAS into our air, water or land. Finally, Congress stepped in and ordered EPA to gather the information.
- Beck failed to require notice of potential new uses of PFAS in consumer products. Finally, Congress stepped in and ordered EPA to act. Beck then pressed EPA to adopt the weakest approach she could get away with⁵, meaning more of our loved ones will be exposed to PFAS.

³ Lipton, E. (2017, October 21). *Why Has the E.P.A. Shifted on Toxic Chemicals? An Industry Insider Helps Call the Shots*. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/21/us/trump-epa-chemicals-regulations.html>

⁴ Lipton, E. (2019, February 12). *How the Trump Administration Pulled Back on Regulating Toxic Chemicals*. Yale Environment 360.

<https://e360.yale.edu/features/how-trump-administration-has-pulled-back-on-regulating-toxic-chemicals>. ("The changes [Beck] ordered reflected arguments, almost word for word, that she had pushed as an industry advocate. She engineered these changes over the strong objection of long-time EPA professional staff.")

⁵ Snider, A. (2018, May 14). *White House E.P.A., Headed Off Chemical Pollution Study*. Politico. <https://www.politico.com/story/2018/05/14/emails-white-house-interfered-with-science-study-536950>

- Beck failed to ban, or even temporarily postpone, the introduction of any new PFAS into the marketplace (and into the environment and our bodies). Instead, when the House was considering bipartisan legislation to postpone the approval of any new PFAS for five years, Beck helped issue a statement from the White House threatening to veto the bill (it passed anyway).
- Beck failed to issue a single order requiring toxicity testing of PFAS, despite the Administration's claims that it needs more information about PFAS before it can restrict their use or set safety standards.
- Beck worked with White House staff to suppress a CDC report showing EPA's existing health standards for toxic PFAS chemicals are too weak to protect our families. The White House was concerned that the report would be a "public relations nightmare."⁶

The CPSC has jurisdiction over numerous consumer products that may contain PFAS, including cookware, carpets, raingear, and footwear. Beck's record at the EPA and the White House amply demonstrates her total lack of commitment to addressing the PFAS crisis and should disqualify her for consideration to be the next Chair of the CPSC.

Unfortunately, Nancy Beck's deeply problematic record isn't limited to undermining efforts to address the PFAS crisis. She has blocked numerous efforts to protect the public from cancer-causing and brain-damaging chemicals, demonstrating her unfitness to lead an Agency charged with protecting our nation's children.

Most notably, Nancy Beck has:

- Withheld needed protection for children, workers and rural communities by blocking the proposed ban on the brain-damaging pesticide chlorpyrifos.⁷
- Rejected needed protection for children by refusing to ban the use of a brain-damaging pesticide (TCVP) in pet products including flea collars and shampoos.
- Blocked proposed rules⁸ for protecting workers, consumers and children from

⁶ Annie Snider, *White House, EPA Headed Off Chemical Pollution Study*, POLITICO (May 14, 2018), <https://www.politico.com/story/2018/05/14/emails-white-house-interfered-with-science-study-536950>.

⁷ Lipton, E. (2017, March 29). *E.P.A. Chief, Rejecting Agency's Science, Chooses Not to Ban Insecticide* New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/29/us/politics/epa-insecticide-chlorpyrifos.html>

⁸ Tabuchi, H. (2019, January 2). *A Trump County Confronts the Administration Amid a Rash of Child Cancers*. The New York Times.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/02/climate/tce-cancer-trump-environment-deregulation.html>

TCE which is linked to cancer, fetal heart defects, liver and kidney toxicity and harm to the immune system.

- Refused to consider exposure to contaminated drinking water as a factor in determining whether to impose restrictions or set safety standards for 1,4 dioxane⁹.
- Delayed children's protections for lead by failing to update the hazard standard for lead paint – contrary to a federal court order.

⁹ Denison R., (2019, November 4). *EPA's scientific peer reviewers don't mince words in blasting its 1,4-dioxane and HBCD risk evaluations*. Environmental Defense Fund blog.
<http://blogs.edf.org/health/2019/11/04/epas-scientific-peer-reviewers-dont-mince-words-in-blasting-its-14-dioxane-and-hbcd-risk-evaluations/>

The last thing that our communities need is Nancy Beck as Chair of the Consumer Product Safety Commission. Our children and family's health should be protected, not sacrificed. We strongly urge you to oppose her nomination.

Linda Shosie
Tucson, Arizona
Environmental Justice Task Force- Tucson

Eric Weiner
Windsor, Connecticut
Clean Water Task Force @ Windsor Climate Action

Stel Bailey
Cocoa, Florida
Fight For Zero

Lindsey Duhe
Pensacola, Florida
Saufley Field Community

Lynn Sprayberry
Summerville, Georgia
Chattooga County

Susan Phelan
West Barnstable, Massachusetts
GreenCAPE

Ryan Riley
Salem, Massachusetts
Your Turnout Gear and PFOA

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Wurtsmith Restoration Advisory Board Community Co-chair
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Need Our Water (NOW)

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