

TO: Interested Parties

FR: Lincoln Park Strategies

RE: Nominee to Oversee Chemical Safety in the US: Survey Results

DATE: October 16, 2017

A new survey shows Americans have significant concerns about chemical safety and few would support Michael Dourson as the nominee to oversee chemical safety at the EPA. With a new administration in the White House, and most changes from Washington coming through executive orders, it is not surprising to see that Americans are extremely concerned about how federal agencies will handle safety issues around food, chemicals, products, and transportation. Indeed, according to our latest national survey,¹ more than 7 in 10 Americans feel it is very important for the government to focus on each of these four aspects of our daily lives. This is especially true when it comes to chemical safety where, according to our survey, 80% of Americans feel it is very important for the federal government to focus on our safety.

Of the four areas we asked about, Americans feel the least confident in our current chemical safety standards. While a plurality of Americans feels our transportation (46%) and product (44%) safety standards are about right, this number drops to 38% when it comes to our food safety standards, and even further when it comes to our chemical safety standards. Just 31% of Americans are comfortable with our current standards when it comes to chemical safety, while a majority (52%) feel that our standards are not strict enough. This includes a majority of Democrats as well as a plurality of Republicans. In fact, of the four areas tested, chemical safety is the one issue where more Republicans across the country feel that we need stronger safety standards than those who feel the standards are about right or too strict.

Given these results, it is not surprising that the vast majority of Americans are hoping that the person in charge of overseeing our chemical safety will focus on holding companies accountable. When asked about the type of person they would like in charge, 77% say they would like to see their senator vote for someone who has experience in the industry and believes that companies must be held to a high standard when it comes to chemical safety and protecting our people and the environment. Even in our current hyper-partisan environment, a majority of Democrats (82%), Independents (71%), and Republicans (76%) agree on this point.

This is bad news for any US Senator who is thinking about voting to confirm Michael Dourson, the nominee to oversee chemical safety at the EPA. After hearing a description of Dourson's background as a co-founder and president of Toxicology Excellence for Risk Assessment, more than half of respondents (54%) opposed confirming Dourson to the chemical safety post, with just a quarter of Americans (28%) supporting his confirmation. Opposition to Dourson's confirmation was particularly strong among self-described Independents, half of whom (51%) opposed his confirmation, including more than half of Independent women (56%). Even among Republicans just 41% support his approval to the post.

Chemical safety is clearly a concern of Americans, and it is evident that Michael Dourson is not their choice to oversee this important department.

¹ 1,000 interviews among adults were conducted from October 6-11, 2017 and were weighted to ensure proportional results. The Bayesian confidence interval for 1,000 interviews is 3.5, which is roughly equivalent to a margin of error of ± 3.1 at the 95% confidence level.