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What Shale Gas and Sound Chemical Policy Can Mean for West Virginia

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Calvin M. Dooley is president and chief executive officer of the American Chemistry Council (ACC). Since joining the ACC in 2008, Mr. Dooley has advocated for a business and regulatory climate that drives innovation, supports job growth and enhances safety.

In 2012, Mr. Dooley oversaw the launch of a national energy advocacy and awareness campaign, "From Chemistry to Energy," and led a multi-year strategic review to enhance Responsible Care®, the chemical industry's world-class environment, health, safety and security performance initiative.

In 2010, Mr. Dooley played an instrumental role in bringing together a coalition of nearly 100 business associations, the American Alliance for Innovation, to promote science-based modernization of the U.S. Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA). He has also called on Congress and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to ensure the best available science and technology are at the foundation of government science and risk assessment programs.

Mr. Dooley represented the 20th District of California as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives from 1991 to 2004.

He earned his bachelor's degree in agricultural economics from the University of California, Davis and, as a Sloan Fellow, earned a master's degree in management from Stanford University.

I've had the pleasure of visiting the Mountain State nearly a dozen times since joining the American Chemistry Council (ACC) in 2008. The reasons I come to West Virginia might seem obvious. With \$8.2 billion in annual shipments, West Virginia's chemistry industry trumps that of all other manufacturing industries in the state. Chemical companies directly employ nearly 10,000 West Virginians and help put 27,000 more in related jobs. And, last year, chemical companies helped put \$747 million in wages into those workers' pockets.

But, the number one reason I keep returning to West Virginia is its bright economic future, which rivals that of any other state. The Mountain State's abundant supply of "wet" Marcellus Shale gas is luring chemical companies from across the United States – and the world – to potentially build, expand or restart facilities that will create the next generation of innovative products. And, that's something to get excited about.

The ACC and its members believe that safety and innovation are twin priorities, and that enhancements in one area do not need to come at the expense of the other.

At least four chemical industry investment projects are expected to break ground in West Virginia during the next few years. Recently, Brazilian-based companies Odebrecht and Braskem announced they are exploring the opportunity to build a world-class ethane cracker plant complex near Parkersburg, West Virginia. Governor Earl Ray Tomblin said the joint



venture would be a "game-changer" for West Virginia – and he's right.

As chemical companies continue to announce plans to capitalize on the shale gas boom, the ACC is focused on state and federal policies that will keep communities and the environment protected, while allowing our industry to grow to its fullest potential.

First, we support sound, state-based regulations and best practices that allow for aggressive natural gas production in a safe and environmentally responsible way. Second, we support the development of a robust federal system for regulating the products of chemistry that must put safety at the forefront.

Recent tragic events involving chemical storage facilities in West Virginia and Texas are important reminders that safety must always be at the core of how companies produce, store or use chemicals. Any company that doesn't abide by regulations, or that fails to make safety its number one priority, is not living up to its obligations to protect its employees and the communities in which it operates.

Nearly 20 ACC member companies are proud to call West Virginia home to at least one of their facilities, and all of them share a strong commitment to Responsible Care®, ACC's world-class environmental, health, safety and security performance initiative.

Responsible Care companies have worker safety rates nearly five times better than the entire U.S. manufacturing sector and nearly three times better than the chemical industry overall. Through a commitment to continuous improvement, Responsible Care® companies have reduced recordable injury and illness rates by 79 percent since 1990. Our ultimate goal is zero accidents, injuries or harm to human health or the environment from our products and operations.

The ACC and its members believe that safety and innovation are twin priorities, and that enhancements in one area do not need to come at the expense of the other. That is why, for the past several years, we have been working with stakeholders and Congress to update the federal law that regulates chemicals, the U.S. Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA). TSCA was enacted in 1976. Since that time, science, industry and the market have all evolved – but the law has not.

The bipartisan Chemical Safety Improvement Act (CSIA) (S. 1009) – historic compromise legislation currently pending in the U.S. Senate – will create a robust federal chemical regulatory system that puts safety first. With 13 Republican and 12 Democrat co-sponsors, the CSIA is our nation's best chance at achieving meaningful TSCA reform.

The members of the House of Representatives are also working to develop legislation that is similar to the CSIA. Both bills would put our federal chemical regulatory system back on track. Both would create public confidence that chemicals can be and are produced and used safely. Moreover, both would provide businesses with the certainty they need to fuel economic growth, create new products and generate tens of thousands of new chemical industry jobs.

However, Congress must act – and it must act soon – on what we have in front of us today. By working together, we can create an effective and predictable regulatory environment that restores public confidence in the safety of chemicals, enables chemical manufacturers to remain competitive globally and ensures the United States can hold on to its position as the world's leading innovator – and West Virginia, a magnet for manufacturing investment for decades to come. ▽



of all manufactured goods are touched by chemistry.



800,000

DIRECT JOBS



25% OF THE U.S. GDP



U.S. patents are chemistry or chemistry-related



41% HIGHER

than the average manufacturing wage.