

## Chairman Dingell, Subcommittee on Environment and Hazardous Materials "Legislative Hearing on S.742 And Draft Legislation to Ban Asbestos in Products"

Statement of Congressman John D. Dingell, Chairman  
Committee on Energy and Commerce

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND  
HAZARDOUS MATERIALS  
"LEGISLATIVE HEARING ON S. 742  
AND DRAFT LEGISLATION  
TO BAN ASBESTOS IN PRODUCTS"  
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Mr. Chairman, today the Subcommittee meets to consider a very important public health issue involving legislation to ban or severely restrict the manufacture and distribution in commerce of asbestos-containing products. Imports of asbestos-containing products would also be prohibited. Many people may be surprised to learn that the use of asbestos, a "known human carcinogen" with no established safe threshold level for exposure, is not banned in the United States.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that more than 8,000 people in the U.S. died in 2004 from mesothelioma and asbestosis. This number does not include deaths from asbestos-related lung cancer. Worldwide, the World Health Organization estimates that 90,000 people die each year from asbestos-related lung cancer, mesothelioma, and asbestosis.

Asbestos litigation has also been a real problem for many companies and industries. The American automotive industry has not manufactured vehicles with any parts containing asbestos for many years and has no intention of doing so in the future. Prohibiting the import of asbestos-containing parts from countries such as China will not only protect the health of American workers but also help reduce future potential liability and litigation costs for responsible companies. That can only be described as a win-win outcome.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you for your leadership in holding this legislative hearing. I would also like to acknowledge the leadership of Senator Patty Murray, who has worked for many years to get asbestos out of products, and the leadership in the House of Representative McCollum, who has introduced legislation and met with me personally to urge action. I hope all members of the Subcommittee are willing to work together in a cooperative manner to protect our citizens from a contaminant that is known to cause cancer and thousands of deaths each year.

Prepared by the Committee on Energy and Commerce  
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