



Hoosick Area Community Participation Work Group

c/o The Paige Group

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June 5, 2020

Senator Roger Wicker, Chairman, Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation
Senator Maria Cantwell, Ranking Member, Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation

Dear Members of the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation:

The Hoosick Area Community Participation Work Group (CPWG) of Hoosick Falls, NY, feels it is of the utmost importance to go on record and express our very deep concern, as well as dismay, regarding the proposed appointment of Dr. Nancy B. Beck to chair the Consumer Product Safety Commission. As you must know, Dr. Beck has a clear track record of relaxing regulations on toxic chemicals that pose a clear risk to human health, making her ill-suited to shepherd consumer protection policy.

Here are just a few examples of Dr. Beck's actions, where, in the face of hard data, she has gambled with human health.

- As a small community severely impacted by PFAS contamination, we have experienced all too well the devastating costs to both the health of our families as well as toxic fallout to the water and soil in our area. Regarding PFAS, Dr. Beck was part of an effort to suppress a key health study from scientists at the CDC that recommended the EPA lower its PFAS health advisory levels. Her actions also led to the EPA reversing course and adopting rules allowing exclusion of risks of 'legacy uses,' and further watering down already watered-down rules regarding PFAS.
- According to White House documents obtained and released by Senator Tom Carper of Delaware, the ranking member of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, Dr. Beck was the driving force behind a White House attempt to weaken the final version of an EPA rule on PFAS. She even asked the agency to carve out a special loophole for importers of PFAS-tainted products. Reported correspondence between the White House and the EPA reveals her hand in creating a regulatory "safe harbor" that would significantly ease restrictions on certain imports containing highly dangerous PFAS compounds that have already been phased out of U.S. production.
- At Dr. Beck's behest, the EPA is currently considering a proposed new rule called Strengthening Transparency in Regulatory Science that would require scientists to disclose all of their raw data, including confidential medical records. As Hoosick Falls has been chosen as one of the multi-site PFAS studies by the ATSDR/CDC, we fear this rule would severely damage and hamper vital research necessary for further health information, as well as future legislation.
- Dr. Beck has led efforts to downplay the harms and blocked the prior proposed ban of TCE, another highly toxic chemical Hoosick Falls has had to grapple with at extraordinarily high and

For more information on remediation activities, please visit:

<https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/108791.html>

or <https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/investigations/hoosick/>

Hoosick Area CPWG was established in March of 2019 as a community liaison with government agencies in regard to remediation of PFOA contamination sites. The CPWG helps ensure information is shared with the community in a timely manner, and provides feedback to the state on community health concern priorities, remediation activities, and the study of alternative water supply options.

dangerous levels, which also attributed, in addition to PFOA, to several locations being listed as NPL Federal Superfund sites in our community. While with the EPA, Dr. Beck downplayed the real-world impacts of various toxic chemicals—limiting risk evaluations, pathways of exposures, and repeatedly discarded the science on health effects of numerous chemicals. This included downplaying the significance of potential health-adverse findings, and directly editing out scientists' mention of potential human health implications in a number of research papers. Many of her changes were made over the strong objection of long-time EPA professional staff, as well as EPA's own Science Advisory Board.

- Most recently, an Associated Press story linked Beck to the Trump Administration's suppression of the CDC guidance on safe reopening of the economy. Response from several senators asserts that emails leaked to the Associated Press show Dr. Beck as the CDC's "main point of contact" in the White House and woefully reminds us again of her suppression of the CDC PFAS recommendations.

All of this is in sharp contrast to the Consumer Product Safety Commission's mandate to prevent harm to the public from consumer products. In the case of PFAS—a broad class of dangerous and pervasive chemicals that are found in all manner of everyday products, from nonstick pans to raincoats to children's car seats—the role of the CPSC to proactively protect consumers is more vital than ever. Just as we seem to be making some progress legislatively getting certain PFAS out of products, such as AFFF foams and children's toys, the CPWG desperately fears the rollbacks Dr. Beck may impose at the behest of industry and the ACC, as her past and current actions would dictate. She has rewritten rules and imposed policy decisions that make people less safe, horrifying to those of us already exposed, which is the exact opposite of the mission and expectation of this role.

We ask the CPSC to act responsibly in this matter by vetoing Dr. Beck's nomination.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Loreen Hackett

Member of the Hoosick Area CPWG on behalf of the Hoosick Area CPWG

cc. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand
Congressman Antonio Delgado