

Nancy Beck is Wrong for Consumers, Workers, and First Responders

Nancy Beck has been nominated to serve as Chair of the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). The agency is responsible for ensuring that the more than 15,000 consumer products under its jurisdiction are safe. These products range from power tools, cleaning supplies and certain building materials to home furnishings, carpets, and children's products like toys and cribs.

The CPSC's mission is to protect the public against harm associated with consumer products. The agency has important authority to protect the public through: (1) enforcing compliance with mandatory safety standards; (2) issuing recalls of unsafe products, (3) enforcing laws that call for labeling and other preventive measures to protect and inform consumers, and (4) researching and testing products to ensure they are safe. The CPSC has broad jurisdiction over consumer products with a mandate to ensure protection from both acute hazards (e.g., poisoning) and chronic hazards (e.g., cancer or birth defects). Recently, the CPSC has focused on safeguarding consumers from choking hazards of toys and risks posed by heavy metals such as lead, chemical plastic softeners such as phthalates, and toxic flame retardants found in consumer products.

Beck's career has been focused on blocking or weakening health and safety protections against toxic chemicals by overstating uncertainty, playing down results accepted by mainstream science, and excluding relevant evidence when assessing chemical safety. Consumers, workers, and first responders would be less safe if Beck is confirmed.

Nancy Beck has prioritized the chemical industry over lifesaving protections, at great cost to the public.

- Nancy Beck's professional career has been focused on blocking or weakening health and safety standards that are aimed at protecting the air we breathe and the water we drink, and ensuring household products are safe. She has done this successfully in several key areas:
 - High-priority chemical risk evaluations— The Obama administration issued rules regulating the process for reviewing whether chemicals are safe for use. The Trump EPA's Office for Chemical Safety, under Beck's helm, revised those rules so they mirrored the less-protective approach she had lobbied for when she was a senior executive at the American Chemistry Council (ACC), a powerful chemical industry lobbying group. In 2019, a federal appeals court agreed with environmental and health advocates that key aspects of her approach are illegal.
 - Toxic per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS)— As an official at EPA, she assisted in delaying the release of a government study on the risks posed by PFAS which the White House deemed a "public relations nightmare." PFAS have been linked to testicular and kidney cancer, birth defects, and immune system disorders. Firefighters are at high risk for serious health effects due to PFAS in firefighting foam; studies show that firefighters have unacceptably elevated blood levels of these chemicals.
- If confirmed, she could prevent the CPSC from taking action to protect the public from health threats posed by PFAS in consumer products such as cookware, carpets, raingear, and footwear.

Nancy Beck's scientific work has been criticized for distorting science.

- A congressional investigation found that Beck improperly intervened in agency decisions and scientific determinations—always to weaken conclusions that certain chemicals posed health risks—when she worked at OMB during the George W. Bush administration.
- The non-partisan National Academy of Sciences noted in a report that a document Beck wrote during her time at OMB that directed federal agencies on how to evaluate risks was “fundamentally flawed” and unanimously recommended that it be withdrawn.

Nancy Beck's appointment would be a huge gift to the chemical industry.

- The CPSC has the responsibility to safeguard consumers from products that are hazardous due to the presence of chemicals. ACC, the powerful lobbying group for Dow, Dupont, Monsanto and other chemical giants—where Beck was a senior executive—has persistently opposed these protections, which have significant impacts for the health and safety of consumers. If Beck's career is any guide for future action, there is no doubt that she will thwart the CPSC's ability to protect consumers from the well documented harms that these chemicals pose—especially to children.
- Beck's experience is grounded in her proven track record of opposing and blocking health and safety rules, and she would bring that anti-protection zeal to the CPSC.

If confirmed, Nancy Beck would be the proverbial fox guarding the henhouse. But worse.

- Beck's entire career shows that she will side with industry at every opportunity. In her new role, she would have great power to do so. The safety of consumers, workers, and families will be in jeopardy if Beck is confirmed.

The groups listed below oppose Nancy Beck's confirmation.

We urge you to voice your opposition to Nancy Beck's confirmation to chair the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

Able Differently • Alaska Community Action on Toxics • American Association for Justice • Arizona PIRG • Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization • AFL-CIO • Breast Cancer Prevention Partners • CALPIRG • Center for Environmental Health • Center for Justice & Democracy • Center for Science in the Public Interest • Citizens' Environmental Coalition • Clean and Healthy New York • Clean Production Action • Clean Water Action • Coming Clean • Consumer Federation of America • CoPIRG (Colorado) • ConnPIRG • Earthjustice • Environmental Defense Fund • Environmental Health Strategy Center • Environmental Working Group • Florida PIRG • Food & Water Action • Georgia PIRG • Green Science Policy Institute • Healthy Babies Bright Futures • Illinois PIRG • Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy • International Union, UAW • Iowa PIRG • Kids In Danger • League of Conservation Voters • Learning Disabilities Association of Georgia • Learning Disabilities Association of Maine • Learning Disabilities Association of South Carolina • Learning Disabilities Association of Utah • Maryland PIRG • MASSPIRG • Moms Clean Air Force • MoPIRG (Missouri) • NCPIRG • NHPIRG • NJPIRG • NMPIRG • National Center for Health Research • National Consumers League • Natural Resources Defense Council • Ohio PIRG • OSPIRG (Oregon) • PennPIRG • PIRGIM (Michigan) • Public Citizen • Protect All Children's Environment • RIPIRG • Safer Chemicals Healthy Families • Safer States • TexPIRG • Union of Concerned Scientists • Union Veterans Council • U.S. Public Interest Research Group • WashPIRG • WISPIRG (Wisconsin)