



TSCA REFORM A POSITIVE SIGN FOR BROADER ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY DEBATE

Brace yourself when you read this statement: This Congress, the 114th, could potentially achieve more on environmental law than any of the 12 Congresses before it. I recognize that is hard to believe, given its historic low approval ratings and heated anti-Washington rhetoric on the campaign trail. However, it is still completely true.

Congress has passed comprehensive legislation to reform the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA), the nation's primary law governing the manufacture of chemicals. The Frank R. Lautenberg Chemical Safety for the 21st Century Act, as it is called, rewrites the 40-year-old TSCA statute to better reflect the state of modern manufacturing, where chemicals are the building blocks for lifesaving products, the newest technologies and everyday products that make life better.

Here's the truly wild part: In a world where Republicans and Democrats in Congress agree on very little—particularly when it comes to the Environmental Protection Agency and the environment—this bill sailed through the House of Representatives on a 403–12

vote. It passed the Senate with a unanimous voice vote. Think about that for a minute: Sens. Mitch McConnell (R-KY) and Barbara Boxer (D-CA) agree on this bill.

You have to go back at least 20 years to find an environmental law that Congress passed and the president signed. For a law the magnitude of the Lautenberg Act, you have to go back to the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990. Congress just doesn't do this kind of thing—at least, conventional wisdom says it is not supposed to.

Yet, we have broad consensus not only on the problem but also the solution. That is the true victory here: Our elected officials rose above the partisanship and got back to solving problems. It is a sign that some of the other big environmental challenges manufacturers are dealing with—ozone, climate change, environmental permitting—are maybe not as off limits as we once thought they were. We will continue to advocate sensible solutions. Let's hope our TSCA victory is a building block to something even better.

