

Rep. Louise M. Slaughter, Chairwoman of the House Committee on Rules, announced that she will make a renewed push for legislation to study links between women's reproductive health and chemicals that may cause hormone disruption. The important bills are intended to increase understanding and spotlight growing awareness of the impact that chemicals in the environment can have on women's health. And the two separate bills are part of a continued push by Slaughter to focus on health care issues in the wake of last month's historic vote in the House to reform the health care system – which would eliminate many forms of insurance industry discrimination against women. Slaughter has 12 original co-sponsors on both her environmental health and hormone disruptor bills.

“These bills are critical in understanding the impact of our environment on public health,” said Rep. Slaughter. “Research has already shown that exposure to certain synthetic chemicals disrupts hormone function and contributes to increased incidences of diseases. It is vital that we continue to study and understand the effects of hormone disrupting chemicals, so we can prevent the unintended consequences on women's health.”

“More than 80,000 chemicals have been introduced into our environment over the last 50 years. At the same time, we've seen increases in many diseases and disorders - including childhood cancers, testicular cancer, juvenile diabetes, thyroid disorders, learning disabilities, cognitive impairments and autoimmune disorders over the last 30 years. In order to prevent further damage to our nation's public health, we must expand our research programs that examine the affects of these chemicals on the human body,” said Slaughter.

While the evidence is mounting that there is an association between these chemicals and hormone disruption, research remains limited, particularly on the impact on women and on how long-term, low-dose exposure to environmental pollutants impacts children at critical stages of development. A women's lifetime risk of breast cancer is 1 in 7 today, compared to 1 in 22 in the 1940s – over half of the cases are unexplained. . It is important to find the root of these disturbing increases and determine any environmental risk factors.

Below is a summary of the two bills:

- The Environmental Hormone Disruption Act will authorize the director of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) to establish a comprehensive program to better understand the impact of hormone disrupting pollutants in the environment on the health of women and children.
- The Women's Environmental Health and Disease Prevention Act will authorize the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) to provide grants to up to 6 multidisciplinary research centers regarding environmental factors that affect women's health, and the health of their offspring.

## **Documents**

- [H.R. 4160, Environmental Hormone Disruption Research Act of 2009](#)
- [H.R. 4161, Women's Environmental Health and Disease Prevention Act of 2009](#)