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News Release

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Governor Rell Signs Chemical Innovations Institute Bill into Law

Advocates Praise the Legislature and Rell for Continued Support of Chemical Policy Reforms

Hartford – With the recent signing of Public Act 10-164, Connecticut has joined Massachusetts and New York to become the third state with an institute devoted to reducing toxic chemicals and promoting safer solutions. By partnering with our neighboring states, Connecticut now has an opportunity to build upon and distribute the information that others have gathered. The new Chemical Innovation Institute will be housed at the UConn Health Center and overseen by board members who will be appointed by elected officials over the next two months.

“The use of safer chemical alternatives has benefits for both worker and environmental health, as well as potentially benefiting companies through improved marketability of products and reduced compliance costs,” said **Timothy Morse, PhD, a professor at UConn’s Occupational and Environmental Health Center and a board member of the Connecticut Public Health Association.** “We anticipate that the Institute will be a great resource for employers who are interested in tools to assess their chemical use and find appropriate alternatives, and will be a useful tool for helping sustainable businesses in Connecticut that can save jobs while promoting the health of workers and the community.”

The bill was championed by a bipartisan group of lawmakers and a diverse coalition of advocacy organizations representing health professionals, businesses, labor, and citizens supportive of a healthy environment.

“It’s great to that Governor Rell has joined the grassroots effort to make sure that Connecticut industry has a resource to turn to in furthering “greening” their products,” said **State Representative Bryan Hurlburt, (D, Tolland), who supported the legislation as vice chair of the legislature’s Environment Committee.** “The institute will be available to provide knowledge on new products and offer assistance to our businesses, non-profits, and state agencies on greener and safer alternatives to current practices. It was an honor and a pleasure to have a part in drafting and passing this piece of legislation.”

In the near-term, funding for the Institute is expected to come from private and government grants and fee-for-service activities.

“The goal is to cater to the needs of Connecticut businesses, and provide valuable services. The Institute is exactly the kind of investment we need to promote an innovative and productive workforce,” said **Thomas Swarr, president of Sustainability by Design, LLC.** “Increasingly, success in global market will depend on economic efficiency *and* environmental excellence. This kind of collaboration between environmental advocates, higher education, and business is the only way to preserve CT manufacturing jobs- creating the safe, green products demanded by consumers.”

The **Coalition for a Safe & Healthy Connecticut**, which supported the legislation, is made up of over 50 organizations representing health professionals, workers, nurses, businesses, environmentalists, occupational safety advocates, people of faith, and individuals whose health has been impacted by toxic chemicals.

www.safehealthyct.org

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