

Tunney hails passage—

Toxic Substances Control Act

Sen. John V. Tunney (D-Calif.) today hailed passage by the Senate Commerce Committee of a major health and environmental bill—the Toxic Substances Control Act—designed to prevent the marketing of products with potential killer chemicals.

Tunney, one of the major sponsors of the legislation, said the bill would require the testing of potential hazardous chemicals and substances to determine their environmental, health and safety effects before they can be put on the market.

The other co-sponsors of the bill are Senators Magnuson, (D-Wash.); Hart, (D-Mich.); and Hartke, (D-Ind.).

"I am confident that the Senate will approve this legislation rapidly. Because if we fail to act now we continue to subject the American consumer to increased risks of cancer, birth defects and permanent genetic damage caused by harmful ingredients in seemingly harmless products," Tunney said.

"Hearings on this subject have demonstrated that asbestos in both consumer and industrial products; mercury in sponges, paint and floor waxes; freon in aerosol cans and refrigeration units; vinyl chloride and other chemicals and substances in some combinations and under some circumstances may have devastating health and environmental consequences."

The bill designates the Environmental Protection Agency to certify the safety of products which could be hazardous.

This is the third Congress in which toxic substances legislation has been introduced and considered. In each of the two previous Congresses, legislation passed both the Senate and the House of Repre-

sentatives only to be stalled when agreements could not be reached.

"We can no longer afford further delay which subjects the American public to incredible hazards of increased risks of cancer, birth defects and permanent genetic damage. I am hopeful that this year we will see this legislation become law.

"The primary purpose of the Toxic Substances Control Act is to provide a means of regulating chemical substances that appear in consumer and industrial products in this country. Perhaps the most important aspect of this program is the absolute necessity of giving regulatory officials the opportunity to review toxicity and use data prior to the manufacture of the chemical. Our experience in the past has amply shown that our failure to adequately test and screen new chemicals and new uses of chemicals prior to their introduction has had disastrous consequences.

"There have been approximately 20 deaths associated with the manufacture of the chemical vinyl chloride. In addition, this chemical has been suspected of causing injury through emissions in industrial use.

"This bill requires that certain chemicals be tested and the results and use data furnished to EPA 90 days in advance of its manufacture.

"In addition, for all other new chemicals for which EPA cannot make prior determination that testing is necessary, manufacturers must give notice of the impending manufacture. Armed with this type of information, EPA could, where necessary, take action to make restrictions or conclude that tests must be conducted.

"The pre-market screening provisions of this bill go to the very heart of a proper toxic substances control program. Without it, or with a limited review, there is virtually no way that a vinyl chloride-like experience might be avoided on a timely basis in the future."