

## **VOTE YES on H.R. 2693**

### **Protecting Workers from Diacetyl Exposure**

The media has been filled with recent reports of a popcorn consumer who was diagnosed with *bronchiolitis obliterans* or “popcorn lung.” But popcorn lung is nothing new; it’s been affecting workers for years. **Your support for HR 2693 can prevent more workers from getting sick or dying from their exposure to diacetyl, the chemical that causes popcorn lung.**

**BACKGROUND ON POPCORN WORKERS LUNG DISEASE.** Seven years ago, a Missouri doctor diagnosed several workers from the same popcorn production plant with *bronchiolitis obliterans*, a rare, irreversible and deadly lung disease. In 2002, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) linked their disease with an artificial butter flavoring called *diacetyl*. Scientists have called the effect of diacetyl on workers’ lungs “astonishingly grotesque” and likened it to “inhaling acid.” **Hundreds of workers in popcorn and flavor production have become ill and several have died of the disease that has become known as “popcorn lung.”** Many of the affected workers were so sick that they needed lung transplants. A 35-year-old popcorn worker who was exposed to diacetyl for just two years testified at a congressional hearing this year that he now suffers from 24% lung capacity and is awaiting a double lung transplant.

**DIACETYL RISKS RECOGNIZED, BUT OSHA HAS NOT ACTED.** In 2003, NIOSH issued a guidance document recommending that workers’ exposure be minimized. In 2004, the Food and Extract Manufacturers Association, the trade association of the flavoring industry, issued similar guidelines. **Yet, five years later, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has failed to issue a standard to protect workers from exposure to diacetyl, preferring to rely on voluntary efforts.** Voluntary efforts, however, have not worked. Last year, California researchers found that despite the issuance of government and industry guidance materials, many of their recommendations have not been implemented in flavor manufacturing facilities and new cases of *bronchiolitis obliterans* have been identified.

**H.R. 2693 – THE POPCORN WORKERS LUNG DISEASE PREVENTION ACT.** H.R. 2693 would require OSHA to issue an emergency standard to minimize worker exposure to diacetyl. The emergency standard applies to the food flavorings industry, as well as popcorn manufacturing and packaging. OSHA would then be required to issue a final standard within two years that would apply to all locations where workers are exposed to diacetyl. HR 2693 was approved in committee by voice vote.

**WIDE-RANGING SUPPORT.** **H.R. 2693 is supported by industry, labor, and scientists,** including the Flavor and Extract Manufacturers Association, the American Industrial Hygiene Association, the American College of Environmental and Occupational Medicine, the AFL-CIO, the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), the Teamsters, The Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers Union and the American Society of Safety Engineers.