



LEGISLATIVE AND POLITICAL ACTION DEPARTMENT

Michael J. Wilson, *International Vice President*
Director

Via Facsimile

September 21, 2007

To All Members of the U.S. House of Representatives

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the 1.3 million members of the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW), I am writing today to urge your support of H.R. 2693, the "Popcorn Workers Lung Disease Act." This legislation, introduced by Representative Lynn Woolsey (D-CA), will finally compel OSHA to issue a standard regulating worker exposure to this deadly chemical.

Diacetyl is used to impart the flavor of butter in popcorn, pastries, frozen foods, and candy. Tens of thousands of food processing workers report to work each day and are exposed to this dangerous chemical that is connected to a potentially fatal lung disease. There have been dozens of cases of what has become known as "popcorn workers lung," or bronchiolitis obliterans—a severe, disabling, and often-fatal lung disease experienced by food industry workers in microwave popcorn and flavor manufacturing plants across the nation. In addition, there is now evidence that diacetyl has caused bronchiolitis obliterans in at least one consumer.

Despite compelling evidence that diacetyl presents a grave danger and significant risk of life threatening illness to employees exposed to the chemical, there are currently no OSHA standards requiring exposures to be controlled.

Last year, the UFCW, together with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, petitioned the Department of Labor (DOL) to issue an Emergency Temporary Standard to stop the continued risk of diacetyl exposure to workers. Forty-two of the nation's leading occupational safety scientists signed on to an accompanying letter agreeing that there is more than enough evidence for OSHA to regulate this dangerous chemical. Still, OSHA has not acted.

H.R. 2693 will finally require OSHA to act on this issue. The bill would require OSHA to issue an interim final standard within 90 days that would include measures to minimize worker exposure to diacetyl through ventilation, isolation, and other engineering controls; respirators; exposure assessment; medical monitoring; and

worker training. It also directs OSHA to issue a final standard within two years which will contain permissible exposure limits. This legislation also has the support of the Flavor and Extract Manufacturers Association, the trade group representing companies that make food flavorings.

The UFCW strongly supports H.R. 2693 and urges you to vote against any weakening amendment, and for passage of the "Popcorn Workers Lung Disease Act."

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. J. Wil". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each name being capitalized and prominent.

International Vice President
Director, Legislative and
Political Action Department