Committee on Chemistry and Public Affairs

Oral Report to Council

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Susan B. Butts

Madame President and Members of the Council,

The Committee on Chemistry and Public Affairs (CCPA) is responsible for providing ACS with advice and recommendations for action on public policy matters that impact the chemical enterprise. In addition, CCPA works to motivate and support ACS member participation in government affairs at both the federal and state levels, encouraging members to visit policymakers in Washington and their home districts, and to contact their legislators through the Act4Chemistry Legislative Action Network.

In my written report, I shared a few of the legislative highlights accomplished in 2015 through the combined efforts of the ACS Office of Public Affairs (OPA) and ACS members. This morning I would like to share another example of the power of ACS member engagement, and an exciting new development for chemistry in Congress.

Last summer, I made an appointment to meet with my Congressman, John Moolenaar, whose district includes Midland, Michigan, home to both The Dow Chemical Company and Dow Corning Corporation. During our meeting, I gave him some introductory ACS materials and several ACS policy statements, and explained that we host Science and the Congress briefings and advocate on issues important to the chemistry enterprise. Congressman Moolenaar mentioned that other members of congress often approach him with questions related to chemistry and the chemical industry. He expressed an interest in creating a chemistry caucus in order to provide information and resources to his interested colleagues on both sides of the aisle. I said that I thought that ACS could help.

I brought this information to the ACS Office of Public Affairs staff, who began working with Rep. Moolenaar to create the Congressional Chemistry Caucus. After several months of work, the caucus is becoming a reality. The mission of the caucus is to educate Members of Congress, their staff, and the public on the benefits of chemistry in today’s society and its economic impact on our country. The caucus will be bipartisan and, although the focus right now is on getting it firmly established in the House, eventually it will be bicameral.

The official launch of the caucus will be in Washington, D.C. on Wednesday April 27th. Congressman Moolenaar, a Republican, is partnering with Congressman Daniel Lipinski, a Democrat from Illinois, as the Caucus founders. The kick-off event will be hosted by ACS, the American Chemistry Council (ACC), and the National Association of Chemical Distributors (NACD). We expect approximately 150 attendees and confirmed speakers include Congressmen Moolenaar and Lipinski, as well as Thomas Connelly, Cal Dooley, who heads ACC, and Eric Byer, CEO of the NACD.

I never anticipated that my meeting with Representative Moolenaar would lead to such an exciting outcome. I think that this underscores why it’s important for ACS members to reach out to their elected officials.

Growing membership in the caucus will be critical to its success. CCPA will work with OPA to recruit ACS members in key congressional districts to ask their House members to join the caucus. I also urge all ACS Councilors encourage their members of Congress to join.

Madame President, this concludes my report.