



External Affairs & Communications

Glenn S. Ruskin

Vice President

January 27, 2020

The Honorable John Barrasso
Senate Committee on Environment and
Public Works
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Thomas Carper
Senate Committee on Environment and
Public Works
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Barrasso and Ranking Member Carper:

On behalf of the American Chemical Society (ACS), I am writing to underscore the importance of the U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board (CSB) to the safety of our members and the chemistry enterprise. ACS represents over 150,000 chemists and chemical engineers and was chartered by the U.S. Congress in 1937 to provide well-founded recommendations on issues of importance to the nation and scientific community.

CSB has a critical mission to “drive chemical safety change through independent investigation to protect people and the environment.” The ACS strongly supports safety in the chemistry enterprise¹, and the CSB provides an essential safety resource by conducting root cause investigations of chemical incidents. Since its inception, the Board has deployed to more than 130 incidents, including three in Delaware, and issued over 800 recommendations to make the chemical enterprise and our communities safer. The Board also performs investigations of general chemical hazards, providing an important preventative function to supplement their incident investigations. Safety organizations, trade associations, corporations, educational institutions, and many others rely on CSB recommendations to improve the safety of processes for workers, students, and the public.

As the number of confirmed members on the Board dwindles, ACS is gravely concerned about the ability of CSB to continue carrying out its vital mission. By February there will be only one remaining board member out of five to decide when to deploy incident investigators, approve the release of final safety reports, and lead public outreach efforts. Currently there are 11 open investigations awaiting release of final reports. Additionally, there will be new incidents requiring a CSB response. A full Board, containing a variety of experts, is essential to support the ongoing mission of CSB to improve safety in the chemical enterprise.

¹ <https://www.acs.org/content/acs/en/policy/publicpolicies/science-policy/safety-in-the-chemistry-enterprise.html>

The Society encourages the Senate and the Administration to work together and ensure the CSB can return to full operational capacity as quickly as possible by confirming Dr. Lemos and advancing additional nominees for the board. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or Will Hartwig (w_hartwig@acs.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Glenn S. Ruskin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "G".

Glenn S. Ruskin