



For Immediate Release

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## **Composites Manufacturers Urge White House to Commission National Academy of Sciences Study on HHS Styrene Ruling**

**Washington, September 27, 2011** – Calling a recent Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) ruling "ill-founded and irresponsible," a coalition of small- and medium-sized composites manufacturers yesterday urged the Obama White House to commission a National Academy of Sciences (NAS) review of HHS' listing of the chemical styrene in its Twelfth *Report on Carcinogens (RoC)*.

"HHS' action has unfairly placed hundreds of small business owners across the country in the untenable position of having to explain to employees and plant neighbors that we use styrene safely," the coalition told White House Chief of Staff William Daley in a letter. The composites industry's request for an independent NAS study is "driven by the conflict of authorities both within and outside of the federal government regarding the health effects of styrene, and public confusion that has resulted from HHS' listing of styrene in the *RoC*," the group told Daley.

During HHS' assessment of styrene it failed to "fairly and transparently" address the breadth of scientific data available on styrene, the preponderance of which – including exhaustive studies by the European Union, Health Canada, and a blue-ribbon panel of scientists affiliated with the Harvard School of Public Health – shows no causal link between styrene and cancer. "The public confusion is exacerbated not just due to the scientific controversy, but because of conflicting statements by HHS staff," the letter pointed out.

HHS guidance documents maintain that a listing in the *RoC* does *not* indicate that anyone's health is actually at risk. Moreover, during a recent press conference, HHS scientists further confused the safety issue by saying they are *not* advocating that workers or consumers change their behavior in the wake of the styrene ruling, but only to "be aware of" the purported cancer link for styrene.

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“A definitive carcinogenicity hazard assessment on styrene from the respected and independent National Academy of Sciences would go a long way towards settling the scientific controversy and allow the Administration to provide responsible guidance to workers and members of the public,” the letter said.

“Left unchallenged, we expect the HHS styrene listing in the 12<sup>th</sup> Edition of the *Report on Carcinogens (RoC)* in mid-June to have the long-term effect of moving manufacturing jobs to Mexico, China, France or one of the many other countries that have not taken such an obviously misleading position regarding styrene.”

Styrene is used in the manufacture of a multitude of products ranging from residential tubs and showers, to non-rusting highway bridges, and ballistic shields for the soldiers serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. The letter can be found in the “Newsroom” at [www.styrene.org](http://www.styrene.org).

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