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Characterizing and Addressing Policy Barriers to Green Chemistry in the United States

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This presentation will describe the key findings of the University of California Special Report, *Green Chemistry in California: A Framework for Leadership in Chemicals Policy and Innovation*. This report was commissioned by the California Legislature in 2004 and was released by the University of California Policy Research Center to the California Senate Environmental Quality Committee and Assembly Committee on Environmental Safety and Toxic Materials in March 2006. Dr. Wilson is the chief author of the report; he presented the reports' key findings before a hearing of the U.S. Senate Environment and Public Works Committee in August 2006.

The report proposes that long-standing weaknesses federal policy, notably the U.S. Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA), have produced a flawed chemicals market in the U.S., and that these market conditions represent a fundamental barrier to the scientific, technical, and commercial success of green chemistry. The report concludes that (1) there is insufficient information in the market for the users of chemicals and chemical products to make informed purchasing decisions; (2) government is overly constrained in its capacity to assess chemical hazards and control those of greatest concern; and (3) these market conditions have dampened the motivation of the private sector to invest in green chemistry at a level commensurate with the pace and scale of the chemical production system. The report characterizes these barriers to green chemistry as the chemical Data Gap, Safety Gap, and Technology Gap, respectively.

The report proposes that policy developments occurring in the European Union, such as REACH, along with efforts by U.S. businesses to "clean" their supply chains of hazardous chemicals, present governments with a unique opportunity to implement a modern, comprehensive approach to chemicals policy that would favor green chemistry by correcting these flaws in the market.

Web Page: coeh.berkeley.edu/greenchemistry/