



Dec. 5, 2010

Dear Special Committee on Nanotechnology:

We have reviewed the documents submitted for the committee on Nov. 30 2010 and are writing to share our thoughts on them, expanding on our previous document submitted on Dec. 1.

We strongly oppose the proposed Act (*Act to create 15.917 (2) and 36.25 (55)*). http://legis.wisconsin.gov/lc/committees/study/2010/NANO/files/0037_1.pdf. The key directive for this Act, which is basically to promote nanotechnology in Wisconsin, is nearly the opposite of the original mission of the committee (focused on protecting citizen and environmental health and developing monitoring and disclosure strategies). It is not clear when or how this mission changed, or who made this decision between now and the last committee meeting on Oct. 26 2010. Clearly this happened behind closed doors--there was no public committee meeting or committee vote on it to our knowledge. We are shocked by this highly non-transparent and undemocratic process for a state legislative policymaking committee.

Just as problematically, the activities outlined in the Act, especially given the new mission, will do little to protect citizens, workers, or the environment, but instead will likely serve primarily to promote and protect nanotech businesses, industry, and research. The Council proposed does not include important stakeholders such as representatives from *organized* citizen or public interest groups, or labor, and even if it did include representatives from these groups, it is set up in a way that will marginalize them. It doesn't include mechanisms to meaningfully engage interested citizens or organizations. The undefined "Information Hub" cannot actually do many of the key activities described in the Act. Moreover, many of the activities proposed are already being done by several other highly-funded entities, and/or are likely to be ineffective, making them a huge waste of time and taxpayer money. We detail these issues and other problems with the Act here: [http://www.nanoceo.net/files/Detailed NanoCEO comments about the proposed Act 15.pdf](http://www.nanoceo.net/files/Detailed%20NanoCEO%20comments%20about%20the%20proposed%20Act%2015.pdf)

The "Options for Legislation" document includes some creative and unique ideas, many of which we think would help facilitate more proactive protection of citizens, workers, and the environment. However, unfortunately, the "Options" document was not submitted as draft legislation but as a "memo," and given this it seems highly unlikely that these ideas will be seriously considered by this committee at this point.

Wisconsin policymakers and committee members had, in this special nanotechnology committee and the years of our work that led to it,¹ an amazing opportunity to develop proactive, creative state-level policy on nanotechnology that engages interested citizens and is responsive to their interests. They could have been leaders in the country and the world in developing a unique governance strategy to address nanotechnology environmental health and safety issues in proactive rather than reactive ways.

But sadly, the committee blew this opportunity—proposing yet another nanotechnology promotion legislation, adding to countless similar efforts and legislation proposed around the country or already in place and highly funded. Our state policymakers apparently think that Wisconsin taxpayers need to subsidize the promotion of nanotech research and development that the federal government has already provided \$12 billion to in the last decade and to help a burgeoning nano industry that is expected to be worth over \$3 trillion by 2015. As Wisconsin citizens and taxpayers, we find this appalling.

Apparently, as with our federal policymakers, in their rush to support—and not constrain or “offend” business and industry—most of our state policymakers have almost entirely ignored the questions and recommendations of engaged citizens such as our group. Committee meetings haven’t once mentioned our organization, which has existed since 2005 and in fact played a pivotal role in the years of work that led to the creation of this committee. The words “citizen” and “public” have barely been mentioned in the committee meetings or documents.

Our policymakers are clearly more interested in protecting and promoting nano business, industry, and research than protecting workers, citizens, or the environment. Consequently, we are giving up on our state policymakers for now.

But we are not giving up on our fellow Wisconsin citizens and workers. We will create our own Citizens Nano Registry. Using citizen-based participatory research methods, and collaborating with other state and national worker and public interest organizations, we will gather information about nanotechnology environmental health & safety in Wisconsin workplaces, homes, markets, and the environment that our public and environmental health agencies apparently cannot obtain. We will communicate our findings with those we think should know about them through a wide range of channels.

Sincerely,

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¹ http://www.nanoceo.net/files/NanoCEO_Nov._30_2010_submission_to_Special_Committee.pdf.

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Mathilde Colin, MS, Education, Outreach, and Community Organizing Staff
Lynette Jandl, Community-Based Researcher and Organizer
Carey Wegener, Community-Based Researcher and Organizer

The following individuals and organizations also support our opposition to this Act and in developing our Citizens Nano Registry (as of Dec. 6 am):

Paulo Martins
Brazilian Research Network in Nanotechnology, Society, and Environment
Brazil

Yann Fievet
Veronique Gallais
Action Consommation
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Georgia Miller,
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Glenn Edward Seaman
Madison, Wisconsin

Louise Dotter
Spring Green Wisconsin

Dr. Cynthia P. Rose, D.C.
Madison, Wisconsin

And more signatories from national and international NGOs to come. Updated signatory list will be found here in coming weeks:

http://www.nanoceo.net/files/NanoCEO_comments_on_Nov._30_ACT.pdf