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Contact: Ben Somberg, 202.658.8129
bsomberg@progressivereform.org

New CPR Report Proposes Seven Key Executive Orders to Advance Environmental, Health and Safety Protections

No Congressional Action Needed for Initiatives President Could Advance with the “Stroke of a Pen”

(Washington) – Faced with gridlock in Congress, President Obama should begin his second term by issuing a series of seven Executive Orders that could bring major advances for the public on health, safety, and the environment, a new report by the Center for Progressive Reform (CPR) says today.

“The second term is a chance for President Obama to take a proactive approach on public protections without waiting for Congress,” said report co-author Rena Steinzor, President of CPR and Professor at the University of Maryland Carey School of Law. “But as we saw in the first term, there’s no time to waste. All of the agencies need to get on a schedule to get their work done, and the White House needs to enforce regulatory deadlines, especially with EPA and OSHA. The safety of the air we breathe, the food we eat, and the toys our kids play with – that’s what’s at stake.”

The CPR Issue Alert, [*Protecting People and the Environment by the Stroke of a Presidential Pen: Seven New Executive Orders for President Obama’s Second Term*](#), argues that the public faces myriad risks that can be reduced with bold action by the Executive Branch. Among the concerns: toxic chemicals that endanger children’s health; the threat of imported food tainted with salmonella, botulism, or other contaminants showing up on grocery store shelves; the hazardous conditions in which some of this country’s most vulnerable workers must toil; widespread asthma that continues to afflict millions of U.S. youth; and climate change.

In many of these areas, such as worker safety and climate change, Congress offers little hope of progress. But in each area, the report argues, the Administration can make significant progress with Executive Orders directing government agencies to take specific steps to create meaningful new safeguards for people and the environment. The seven recommended Orders are:

- **Executive Order to Take Action on Climate Change Mitigation**, setting a detailed regulatory agenda directing the EPA to fulfill its obligations under the Clean Air Act to regulate greenhouse gas emissions from major industrial sources, including finalizing its proposed standards for new or modified power plants and oil refineries, and developing standards for a variety of existing sources.
- **Executive Order to Prioritize and Coordinate Planning for Climate Change Adaptation**, requiring agencies to consider how climate change will affect their proposed

and ongoing activities and to design their actions in ways that ease, rather than exacerbate, the challenges faced by communities and ecosystems.

- **Executive Order to Avoid Dangerous Imports**, creating a Cabinet-level Working Group to address the cross-cutting problems posed by imported foods, drugs, and consumer products, focusing primarily on ways to hold importers accountable for verifying the safety of their suppliers' products and to expand enforcement authority over foreign companies.
- **Executive Order to Protect the Health and Safety of Children and Future Generations**, charging an interagency Task Force with developing and carrying out an affirmative agenda of coordinated regulatory actions to address high priority threats to the health and safety of children and future generations. The first priorities would be children's workplace health and safety, asthma, toxic chemicals, and climate change.
- **Executive Order to Protect Contingent Workers**, tailoring existing enforcement and voluntary consultation programs of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to better account for the unique occupational safety and health challenges that the growing contingent workforce—workers who are not employed on any kind of long-term contractual basis—face. Would establish an affirmative regulatory agenda to protect contingent workers against musculoskeletal injuries.
- **Executive Order to Reform OIRA's Role in the Regulatory System**, reorienting the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) so that it is aimed toward working proactively with agencies to help them achieve their statutory missions of protecting public health, safety, and the environment.
- **Executive Order to Restore the SBA Office of Advocacy's Focus on Small Businesses**, directing the Small Business Administration's (SBA) Office of Advocacy to focus its rulemaking interventions so that they help truly small businesses—those with 20 or fewer employees—and to assist these truly small businesses in participating more effectively in the rulemaking process.

The report was written by CPR Member Scholars Robert Glicksman, Amy Sinden, and Rena Steinzor, and Senior Policy Analyst Matthew Shutz and Policy Analysts James Goodwin and Michael Patoka.

The report is available on CPR's website at:

http://www.progressivereform.org/articles/Stroke_of_the_Pen_1215.pdf

The Center for Progressive Reform (www.progressivereform.org) is a nonprofit research and educational organization dedicated to protecting health, safety, and the environment through analysis and commentary. Visit CPR on the web at www.progressivereform.org and read CPRBlog at www.progressivereform.org/cprblog.

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