

Statement on the Ongoing Fight to Secure NJ's Chemical Plants

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Congressman Rothman Issues Statement on Ongoing Fight to Secure NJ's Chemical Plants

Today, the Department of Homeland Security issued their Interim Final Regulations on chemical facility security. Congressman Steve Rothman's (D-NJ) statement follows:

"This is another outrageous example of the Bush Administration siding with special interests over the interests of the people even when the lives and safety of literally millions of Americans is being threatened! The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) asserts "conflict preemption" in its new regulations. By the department's own admission, this means that if a state or local measure to regulate security at a high-risk facility conflicts with, interferes with, hinders or frustrates the purpose of the DHS regulations, that measure would be preempted. That is 100% unacceptable.

"I will fight to retain language like mine, which was included in the House passed supplemental appropriations bill, that prevents DHS from preempting state or local chemical plant security and safety regulations. With my language, DHS will be prohibited from using federal funds to approve a site security plan unless the facility meets or exceeds the tougher security standards established by the state or local government where the facility is located. DHS should be establishing a floor for security, not a ceiling. If a state or local government wants to build upon that floor, DHS should be happy about it! Government's first responsibility is to protect the safety of the people, not the profits of the chemical industry."

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