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April 15, 2013

Senator Noreen Evans
Chair, Senate Judiciary Committee
State Capitol, Room 2187
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 193 (Monning) - SUPPORT

Dear Senator Evans:

We write to inform you that the California Nurses Association (CNA) supports SB 193 (Monning). CNA is comprised of 86,000 registered nurses (RN) throughout the State of California, and has been a staunch advocate for safe work environments for RNs and other health care workers; and for safe and quality care for patients. The majority of our members practice nursing in acute care settings, where they are routinely faced with occupational risks that can impact their health and wellbeing, including exposure to toxic substances. As such, we have a strong stake in matters pertaining to occupational health and safety, and want to use this opportunity to communicate our support for this legislation.

RNs and other health care workers can be exposed to harmful substances, sometimes without even knowing it. RNs and other healthcare workers who transport, prepare, administer and dispose of hazardous drugs can be exposed to these toxic agents in the air or on work surfaces, clothing, medical equipment and other surfaces. As a result, nurses, other healthcare workers and nonclinical workers are at risk for exposure when they create aerosols, mix liquids, generate dust, or touch contaminated surfaces if safe handling precautions are not followed. Exposure to hazardous drugs can cause cancer, reproductive and developmental problems, allergic reactions and other adverse effects that can be irreversible even after low-level exposures. For example, the Kaiser Permanente Center for Health Research published a study showing that exposure of pregnant women handling antineoplastic agents during pregnancy was associated with an increased risk for spontaneous abortions and stillbirth. In 2005, a survey of 7500 members of the Oncology Nursing Society found a significant increased risk for infertility and miscarriage among nurses less than 25 years of age working with chemotherapy.

Current law requires HESIS to provide information of practical use to employers, employees, and others on toxic workplace hazards. But it does not give HESIS the ability to find out where

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any toxics are being used in California, thus undermining HESIS ability to provide early warnings. SB 193 would require chemical manufacturers and others in the chain of distribution to provide, upon written request, the names and addresses of customers who have purchased specified toxics or commercial products containing those toxics, and SB 193 also assures that the customer lists will remain confidential.

SB 193 assures that HESIS can reach and advise employers on measures needed to protect their workers, including information on safer alternatives, when HESIS has information regarding negative health impacts of certain toxic chemicals. HESIS will be able to target those at risk rather than merely posting its valuable guidance to limit exposure and prevent disease on the web with no guarantee it will reach those in need. As workers are often exposed to toxics whose health effects are not all known, HESIS's ability to act quickly and efficiently is vital to protect workers' health and safety.

For these reasons we support SB 193 and ask for your "aye" vote when the bill comes before you in committee. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Kelly Green
Regulatory Policy Specialist

cc: Senator Bill Monning
Members, Senate Judiciary Committee
Consultant, Senate Judiciary Committee