

ATTENTION JUSTICE & HEALTH STAFFERS



April 20, 2015

The Honorable Mark Stone, Chair
Assembly Judiciary Committee
1020 N Street, Room 104
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Opposition to asbestos industry bill to delay and deny justice and fair compensation for victims (AB 597)

Dear Assembly Member Mark Stone:

As the President and Co-Founder of the Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization (ADAAO), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and the largest independent asbestos victims' organization in the U.S., we urge you to **vote no** on the asbestos industry's legislative attempts to delay and deny justice and fair compensation for victims through AB 597.

Asbestos is a known human carcinogen that causes deadly cancerous diseases and kills at least 10,000 Americans every year. In fact, more than 30 Americans die each day from preventable asbestos-caused diseases. As such, it remains a major public health hazard that severely affects too many American families.

AB 597 would serve as a further blow to victims of asbestos exposure scrambling to secure justice as they face the lethal consequences of exposure to a product whose dangers were hidden by an industry that put profits before the welfare of people. We oppose the bill not only because it is fundamentally unfair and discriminatory toward asbestos cancer victims, but because it is entirely one-sided. It seeks absolutely nothing in terms of increased transparency from the same industry that caused the largest man-made disaster in human history and covered it up for years.

There is no justification for exposing families to the additional burdens set forth in AB 597. There is no transparency problem with California law regarding asbestos cases. Likewise, there is no "double dipping," as the asbestos industry claims. Existing state law already reduces plaintiff's economic damages in a civil case by amounts received from an asbestos trust.

What the asbestos industry seeks with AB 597 are unfair advantages during the discovery phase of a civil case that will cause delays in cases involving victims facing just months to live. For such victims, their potential pain and suffering damages die with them. The industry also seeks unfair advantages in admissibility of evidence from an asbestos trust and to reopen cases, denying the asbestos victim and their family a chance at closure. Any resulting delay in compensation will gravely impact patients' pursuit of medical care, negatively affect all victims of asbestos exposure, and effectively limit the justice they deserve.

We hope that when the California Legislature considers AB 597, you will listen closely to asbestos victims about the true impact from this ill-conceived legislation. Justice delayed is justice denied.

Sincerely,

President and Co-Founder, Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization

cc: via e-mail to Assembly Member Cooley at AssemblyMember.cooley@assembly.gov

Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit volunteer organization

"United for Asbestos Disease Awareness, Education, Advocacy, and Community"

1525 Aviation Boulevard, Suite 318 · Redondo Beach · California · 90278 · 310.251.7477

www.AsbestosDiseaseAwareness.org

Members of the Assembly Judiciary Committee

via e-mail to Allison.Merrilees@asm.ca.gov

Members of the Assembly Judiciary Committee:

Assembly Member Mark Stone, Chair (Dem AD 29)
State Capitol Room 5155, Sacramento, CA 94249-0029
Phone - (916) 319-2029 FAX - (916) 319-2129

Assembly Member Donald P. Wagner, Vice Chair (Rep AD 68)
State Capitol Room 3098, Sacramento, CA 94249-0068
Phone - (916) 319-2068 FAX - (916) 319-2168

Assembly Member Luis A. Alejo (Dem AD 30)
State Capitol Room 2117, Sacramento, CA 94249-0030
Phone - (916) 319-2030 FAX - (916) 319-2130

Assembly Member Ed Chau (Dem AD 49)
State Capitol Room 2179, Sacramento, CA 94249-0049
Phone - (916) 319-2049 FAX - (916) 319-2149

Assembly Member David Chiu (Dem AD 17)
State Capitol Room 2196, Sacramento, CA 94249-0049
Phone - (916) 319-2017 FAX - (916) 319-2117

Assembly Member James Gallagher (Rep AD 03)
State Capitol Room 5128, Sacramento, CA 94249-0003
Phone - (916) 319-2003 FAX - (916) 319-2103

Assembly Member Cristina Garcia (Dem AD 58)
State Capitol Room 5164, Sacramento, CA 94249-0058
Phone - (916) 319-2058 FAX - (916) 319-2158

Assembly Member Chris R. Holden (Dem AD 41)
State Capitol Room 319, Sacramento, CA 94249-0041
Phone - (916) 319-2041 FAX - (916) 319-2141

Assembly Member Brian Maienschein (Rep AD 77)
State Capitol Room 4139, Sacramento, CA 94249-0077
Phone - (916) 319-2077 FAX - (916) 319-2177

Assembly Member Patrick O'Donnell (Dem AD 70)
State Capitol Room 4166, Sacramento, CA 94249-0070
Phone - (916) 319-2070 FAX - (916) 319-2170