

UNITEHERE!

275 Seventh Avenue, New York, NY 10001 • TEL (212) 265-7000 • FAX (212) 265-3415 • WWW.UNITEHERE.ORG

October 18, 2005

Dear Senator:

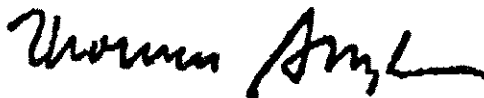
We are writing to ask that you oppose S.1711, an outrageous attempt to exploit the tragedy of Hurricane Katrina to justify sweeping waivers of public health, safety and environmental laws. S. 1711 would grant to US EPA the sole and absolute authority to waive federal or state laws anywhere in the country for up to one and a half years. And this waiver authority would extend well beyond environmental laws. Worse, EPA need not demonstrate that such a waiver is required to protect public health and safety.

The bill's anti-environment agenda exploits the human suffering from the hurricane by allowing private industry to operate above the law, and ultimately to risk more suffering to the very people injured by the hurricane. S. 1711 especially threatens the most vulnerable communities in the Gulf, and those living in the shadows of oil refineries, by authorizing the elimination of protections that ensure they have clean water, clean air and the right to live in a toxic-free community.

EPA has already granted dozens of waivers under currently existing authorities, and consequently there is no reason to move hastily to pass legislation that places the citizens of the Gulf States in jeopardy, and threatens public health and the environment throughout the country.

Now is not the time to waive the safeguards that protect what little these communities have left. This tragedy should not become the basis for sweeping proposals that further degrade these communities' local neighborhoods as they begin to rebuild their lives, and should not be the basis for weakening environmental protections or preempting state authority nationwide.

Sincerely yours,



Thomas Snyder
National Political Director