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Center for Progressive Reform Celebrates 10 Years of Influencing Regulatory Policy, Environmental Debates

(Washington) – The Center for Progressive Reform (CPR), a virtual think tank bringing together scholars from around the country with expertise in environmental, health, and safety regulation and policy, is celebrating its 10th anniversary year in 2012, and marking the occasion with a reception this evening in Washington DC.

“What started a decade ago as a small group of passionate professors is now a DC player,” said CPR President Rena Steinzor, a Professor at the University of Maryland Carey School of Law. “We’ve found the way to bring scholars who usually publish in academic journals further into the ongoing policy debate.”

Since CPR was founded in 2001, Member Scholars and staff have collaborated to publish more than 75 white papers and reports on topics ranging from the challenges for EPA’s IRIS toxic chemical database to climate change adaptation policies in the Puget Sound to strengthening the civil justice system. Other highlights:

- In February 2011, CPR produced the first comprehensive critique of a widely-cited study sponsored by the Small Business Administration that had claimed regulations cost \$1.75 Trillion; the CPR paper, cited numerous times by Members of Congress, helped set the facts straight.
- In November 2011, a CPR paper provided the most comprehensive ever empirical assessment of the actions of the White House’s Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, an office that CPR scholars have demonstrated serves as a road block to needed health and safety regulations across administrations.
- A 2005 CPR paper published within a few weeks of Hurricane Katrina examined the environmental and energy policy choices that contributed to the disaster. The paper was the product of a unique collaboration of 17 CPR Member Scholars each bringing specific areas of expertise to bear.
- A late 2008 CPR report sketched out a series of possible Executive Orders and other presidential actions and regulatory initiatives for the incoming Obama Administration, many of which were acted on.
- An early 2010 CPR white paper offered a report card on the Obama Administration’s first-year regulatory record, pointing up multiple areas for improvement.
- A series of CPR white papers highlighted the Bush Administration’s efforts to preempt state tort laws with federal regulatory action, a sort of backdoor tort reform aimed at locking the courthouse door to victims of various corporate misdeeds.

- Several CPR reports during the Bush years illuminated the inadequacy and illegality of the Administration's approach to regulating mercury emissions – an approach eventually rejected by the courts for the very reasons cited by CPR's Member Scholars.
- A number of CPR reports focused on the abuse of science and scientists by Bush Administration appointees, leading to a series of recommendations for the Obama Administration.
- Several CPR reports have examined efforts to clean up the Chesapeake Bay, many focused directly at the Bay states' lack of accountability for their clean-up commitments over the years.

The organization boasts a roster of 53 Member Scholars, supported by a staff of nine. Four CPR Member Scholars were appointed to positions in the Obama Administration (and took leave from the organization). The organization's new executive director, Jake Caldwell, formerly of the Center for American Progress, formally assumes his duties next week. Caldwell succeeds Shana Jones, who is leaving to teach environmental policy at Old Dominion University in Virginia.

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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