



Independent Women's Forum & Independent Women's Voice

## **Proposal to Monsanto**

### ***Culture of Alarmism Event***

Submission Date: April 21, 2016

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## Executive Summary

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The Independent Women's Forum (a 501 (c)(3)) and the Independent Women's Voice (a 501 (c)(4)) are dedicated to building a more informed citizenry so that we have sound public policies that allow for a growing, prosperous society as well as a healthy, secure country.

In support of this mission, IWF and IWV launched a "Culture of Alarmism Project," to debunk media hype about the risks Americans face from the products we use, the foods we eat, and the environment surrounding our families. We seek to raise awareness about the best science and data relating to these risks so that people have a better, fact-base understanding and can make sensible lifestyle choices.

Today, IWF and IWV aim to host a series of Super Women of Science events around the country where experts in the field of agriculture, biotechnology, chemistry and toxicology, and parenting come together for a fact-based discussion about food, agriculture and the scientific issues that are important to moms.

We are planning the first event to be held in Sacramento, California in 2016 to focus on Prop 65--the Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986, which prohibits businesses from discharging potentially harmful chemicals in drinking water and requires them to disclose the presence of such chemicals on their premises. The 19-page list of hundreds of potentially dangerous chemicals kept by the state is updated annually.

Yet, many are concerned that this list has become a useful tool for environmental groups and trial lawyers, each of whom have benefitted financially by scaring consumers about safe products and healthy food as well as bringing lawsuits against companies for failing to comply with the complex regulations laid out in Prop. 65. IWF seeks to have a conversation about how Prop. 65 can be improved so that businesses can still flourish in the state while consumers continue to be protected.

**We ask Monsanto to support this important initiative  
with a contribution of \$43,300.**



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## Event Details

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**Title:** Proposition 65: Helping or Harming Californians?

**Location:** Sacramento, California

**Date Options:** August or September 2016

**Description:** IWF will host a cocktail reception followed by a panel discussion on Prop. 65 and its affect on commerce, specifically women-owned businesses and how consumers re being needlessly frightened about common everyday products and nutritious food. Media will be invited.

IWF's Julie Gunlock will open the event by explaining how our culture is now saturated with negative and alarmist messages and how moms are often targeted by activist organizations. She will then explain the history of Prop. 65, its affect on businesses and the many lawsuits which have reaped significant settlements over chemicals that have never been proved to cause significant harm at the levels in which they are present. For instance, in 2008 alone, a total of 199 lawsuits were settled, netting \$14.6 million in attorney fees and just \$4.6 million in civil penalties.

Gunlock will then invite the panelists to discuss the topic and there will be time for questions from the audience. Invited guests can mingle with science communicators before and after the panel discussion to network and build relationships.

IWF hosted a similar event in Washington, D.C. in 2015. Dozens of science writers were in attendance as well as members of the media and scholars from Washington think tanks. The conversation spanned many topics—from agriculture to vaccinations to the fear of chemicals in food to the success of certain bloggers and Hollywood actresses who promote misinformation about health and wellness. IWF hopes to recreate this event outside of Washington, particularly reaching audiences in states that impose these burdensome and largely unnecessary regulations.



## **Possible Participants:**

**Moderator:** Julie Gunlock, Senior Fellow, Independent Women's Forum

## **Panelists:**

- Yvette D'Entremont, The Sci Babe, California-based science writer
- Alison Bernstein, Mommy PhD, California-based science writer
- Lane Scott, IWF Senior Fellow, California farmer
- California doctor (need recommendation)
- Female business owner (talking to CA Chamber of Commerce)
- Steven Allen, President and CEO of AllenStrategic, a public affairs & communications firm in Sacramento, CA. Former reporter for the St. Petersburg Times and The Washington Post.
- Female restaurant owner (talking to NRA for contact)
- Jeffrey Herald, President/CEO of West Coast Trends
- Emily Rooney, President, Agricultural Council of California
- Cynthia L. Cory, Director, Environmental Affairs, California Farm Bureau Federation
- Trudi Hughes, Government Affairs Director, California League of Food Processors
- Lenore Skenazy, parenting expert, Founder, Free Range Kids
- Anne Marie Buerkle, Commissioner, Consumer Products Safety Commission

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## **Event Budget**

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Travel and Accommodation (IWF staff and speakers):	\$13,300
Event Space and Catering:	\$10,000
Event Promotion	\$ 8,000
Staffing:	\$12,000
<b>TOTAL EVENT COSTS:</b>	<b>\$43,300</b>

*Funding Partners: IWF/IWV staff are also speaking to the American Chemistry Council and the Chamber of Commerce for support of this event.*



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## Key Outcomes

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**The goal of this event is to build a better awareness among key stakeholders:**

- **Consumers:** Raising awareness will lead to a better educated population who can demand policy makers revise Prop. 65 in a smart way so that it still protects consumers while allowing business and innovation to thrive.
- **The Media:** Engaging the media is critical if we are to get the public to understand the problems associated with Prop. 65. Unfortunately, too often, the media promotes the message pushed by environmental groups. We hope to push back on that narrative and provide the media with alternative information about how consumers are impacted by these onerous regulations.
- **Lawmakers:** Lawmakers need to know that there's concern about Prop. 65 and a hunger for changes to the law. This event will show that this is an issue of importance to women and that women want the law to be improved. IWF staff will reach out to California legislators and their staffs to invite them to the event.

Prior to the event, IWF fellows will publish two opinion articles—one targeting California media, the other targeting a national media outlet. IWF will encourage the panelists to do the same.

IWF will promote the event heavily on social media.

*Thank you for considering this request.*