



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

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OFFICE OF
PREVENTION, PESTICIDES AND
TOXIC SUBSTANCES

Melanie A. Marty, Ph.D., Chair
Children's Health Protection Advisory Committee
Cal/EPA, Office of Environmental Health Hazard
Assessment
1515 Clay Street, 16th Floor
Oakland, California 94612

Dear Dr. Marty:

Thank you for your letter of July 31, 2007, to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Administrator, Stephen L. Johnson, providing the Children's Health Protection Advisory Committee's (CHPAC's) recommendations on evaluating existing and new chemicals for potential adverse impacts on children. The Office of Prevention, Pesticides, and Toxic Substances (OPPTS) has been asked to respond to your letter.

Let me begin by saying we very much appreciate the views and recommendations of CHPAC on chemical-related issues. Like you, we appreciate the importance of fully protecting children from environmental risks and unnecessary exposure to chemicals and other hazardous substances. CHPAC's role as an advocate for children's health issues as they relate to environmental concerns is an important one and we look forward to continuing to work with the Committee on this important issue.

CHPAC's recommendations are of particular interest to my office as we prepare to participate in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico cooperative effort on chemicals announced at the North America Leaders' Summit on Tuesday, August 21st under the auspices of the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP). The agreement calls for the development of a regional partnership for working cooperatively on science-based risk assessment and risk management of chemicals in commerce for the purposes of understanding and dealing with the potential risk from the manufacture and use of these commercial chemicals. The commitment calls on the United States, by 2012, to complete screening-level characterizations and take action, as needed, on more than 9,000 High Production Volume (HPV) and Moderate Production Volume (MPV) chemicals, produced above 25,000 pounds per year. This EPA effort will build on the work done under Canada's efforts to categorize chemicals for review, assessment, and management and under EPA's High Production Volume (HPV) Challenge Program.

As a first step in this initiative, we posted an initial set of completed hazard characterizations on 101 High Production Volume (HPV) chemicals on EPA's website at <http://www.epa.gov/hpv/hpvis/abouthc.htm> in September 2007. We will review human and environmental exposure-related information collected from EPA's Inventory Update Rule (IUR) reporting in combination with HPV hazard data to develop screening-level HPV chemical risk characterizations. We will use this work to support risk-based decisions (RBDs) identifying additional information needs (e.g., higher tier toxicity tests, exposure information, etc.) and actions that may be needed to mitigate potential risks. Such actions could include regulatory and voluntary efforts. We plan to post an initial set of RBDs on HPV chemicals by the end of this year and move toward regular posting of RBDs in 2008. Because the exposure-related information collected under IUR includes information indicating if a chemical is used in products intended for children, I believe we will make substantial, new progress toward identifying and acting on chemicals that may pose exposures and risks to children.

We plan to post initial hazard assessments on MPV chemicals beginning in 2008. These assessments will identify chemicals in need of additional action, such as collecting exposure information to inform risk assessment, obtaining test data needed to adequately assess hazards, or taking other actions. The work done by Canada in its categorization efforts will be used as a starting point for our work.

This collaborative approach has the potential to achieve greater public health and environmental protection by promoting a more integrated approach to chemicals assessment and management in the North American region. We believe that by collectively sharing information and the assessment burden, we will be able to more quickly and efficiently determine the need for, and take, needed actions on a greater number of chemicals.

The growing concern about lead in children's toys and jewelry highlights the on-going concern about childhood lead poisoning. EPA has an active, multi-pronged program to prevent elevated blood lead levels and the associated consequences in children from leaded paint and related sources in older housing. EPA's lead-paint program includes a national regulatory infrastructure, outreach and education programs aimed at those most at risk, and educating those who can help address the problem. The program also issues grants targeted to vulnerable populations whose children are at risk for lead-poisoning. EPA works closely with CPSC, HUD, CDC and others on the Federal goal to eliminate childhood lead poisoning as a major public health concern by 2010.

EPA requires the training and certification of lead-based paint professionals who conduct lead-based paint inspection, risk assessment and abatement services in residences and child-occupied facilities, such as day care centers. We require practices for lead-paint abatement that assure the work is done adequately and safely. EPA, together with HUD, issued the rule that mandates lead-based paint disclosure requirements for sales and rentals of pre-1978 housing, thus ensuring that home buyers and renters are made aware of lead-based paint hazards and provides the right to a lead inspection before purchase. Similarly, the Pre-Renovation Education Rule implements a very simple concept – that all owners or tenants of pre-1978 housing (about 15 million housing units) should be given basic information about lead-poisoning prevention before paint-disturbing renovations are started. EPA also issued a rule on the Identification of Hazardous Levels of Lead in Dust and Soil.

In addition, as part of our multi-faceted efforts on lead, we conduct outreach to assist regulated parties in complying with regulations, inform people of their rights under these rules, educate the public about the nature of lead-based paint hazards, and provide guidance on how to reduce risks. We operate a bilingual 1-800 number and continuously develop public education and outreach materials for lead professionals and families alike so they clearly understand their responsibilities and ways to prevent risk. EPA also has several grant programs targeted to populations still at risk for lead poisoning, including grants for Federally-recognized Indian tribes and tribal consortia, low-income communities with older housing and grants to target populations still at risk for elevated blood lead levels.

At present, EPA is developing a rule, which, when completed in 2008, will minimize lead hazards that result from the disturbance of lead-based paint during renovation, repair, and painting work and will further reduce children's exposure to the harmful effects of lead.

I want to thank CHPAC for your continued interest in our Voluntary Children's Chemical Evaluation Program (VCCEP) which, as you are aware, is a pilot program intended to demonstrate how chemical manufacturers can voluntarily develop and make publicly available scientific assessments of the risks of certain chemicals to children using a scientifically sound process. Over the years, we have received a substantial amount of valuable input from the Committee related to how we might improve VCCEP. Your recent recommendations coincided with the Agency's interim evaluation of the implementation of the VCCEP pilot and reiterated some of the issues on which EPA was seeking comment from stakeholders, the public, and other interested parties. The Federal Register notice that requested comment on the VCCEP pilot asked specific questions about the VCCEP process and accomplishments to date for the purpose of identifying any changes which should be considered to improve the program's timeliness and effectiveness.

EPA especially wanted comment from those who had experience with the program as chemical sponsors or users of the data. EPA appreciates the time and effort the Committee spent in making recommendations on VCCEP and we are considering your recommendations, along with the other comments received, in our evaluation of what process modifications may contribute to an improved VCCEP. We believe VCCEP has proven to be a valuable, foundation-building experience for the chemical industry, public interest groups as well as EPA with regard to assessing the risks chemicals may pose to children. We also believe that the pilot program could be the basis for a broader effort that would use an enhanced, streamlined VCCEP process to develop needed higher tier testing and exposure information and detailed assessments of chemicals identified to be of concern in our SPP-related chemical screening efforts.

As you may be aware, EPA is currently launching a Sustainability initiative, led by EPA's Office of Research and Development, that will address the concerns raised in the letter on the need for more focused activity in the area of pollution prevention (P2) and sustainability. Other relevant efforts include those of EPA's Green Chemistry Program, which OPPT leads, which has recently undergone detailed strategic planning, internally and with key program partners, to evaluate focus areas for the future. EPA conducted this planning with specific interest in broadening its general customer base as well as identifying important target audiences. This planning will dove-tail with EPA's P2 and Sustainability initiatives to identify important focus areas for the future, including children's health.

EPA's Design for the Environment (DfE) Program is continuing its work to prevent risks to adults and children by leveraging information on safer chemical ingredients developed through its Formulator Safer Product Recognition Program. DfE is also preventing pollution through its alternatives analysis and informed substitution initiatives. DfE work which is now available on EPA's website focused on a life-cycle analysis of lead-free solders for use in electronics manufacture (or printed circuit board manufacturing) and an analysis of alternatives to the chemical pentabrominated diphenyl ether (pentaBDE) previously used as a flame retardant in furniture foam. The Flame Retardants in Printed Circuit Board Partnership is presently underway and is providing key data to the electronics industry on alternative flame retardants that may reduce risks to public health and the environment while meeting fire safety needs.

In addition to our efforts under the Design for the Environment and Green Chemistry programs, we continue to focus our pollution prevention programs on areas that will lead to reduced risks to children and their environments. For example, working in collaboration with industry and other government agencies, programs like the Green Suppliers Network and Environmentally Preferable Purchasing hold great promise as we work to improve environmental considerations regarding the manufacture, purchase, and use of chemicals in products. And, we have had great success in encouraging the removal of toxic chemicals such as mercury from healthcare products through programs like Hospitals for a Healthy Environment. The effectiveness of our pollution prevention program, in fact, was recognized by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in a 2006 assessment. OMB gave the P2 program the second highest rating of any EPA program that has undergone a review under the Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART).

Since 2005, EPA has awarded Community Action for a Renewed Environment (CARE) grants to almost 50 communities, many of whom are specifically focusing on children's health issues, including children's exposure to lead, mercury, household chemicals and pesticides, diesel exhaust, and toxics in general. The CARE program helps communities understand, prioritize, and address their local risks by involving a broad partnership. To date, CARE projects have garnered support from over 800 partners, including community groups, local, state, and tribal governments, businesses, and universities, leveraging EPA funds for at least \$1.4 million more. EPA is partnering with CDC to provide communities with a more integrated set of tools and technical assistance to address their most pressing problems. On July 18, 2007, EPA Administrator Johnson and CDC Director Gerberding signed an MOU to collaborate to improve support for community-based environmental health initiatives. Through this initiative, EPA and CDC/ATSDR have formed cross Agency teams to improve community capacity to understand and address children's environmental health risks

I also want to make sure that you are aware that in 2003, EPA requested that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention add a number of new chemicals of concern, including PFOS, PFOA, PBDEs, and others, to the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) biomonitoring program. CDC accepted the EPA nominations, and in the case of the perfluorinated compounds, also performed retrospective analyses of stored serum samples collected from 1999-2000 NHANES participants. These data serve as a nationally representative baseline of the U.S. population's exposure to perfluorinated compounds. PFOS and PFOA are of

concern for a variety of effects, including adverse effects seen in the offspring in 2-generation studies in animals. In August 2007, CDC scientists published a report documenting significantly lower levels of PFOS (32%) and PFOA (25%) in blood samples from 2003/4 when compared to those in 1999/2000, concluding that these reductions most likely were related to the discontinuation of industrial production of PFOS in 2002 and to other changes brought about by EPA and industry's actions on these chemicals.

Again, thank you for your letter and your comments and recommendations on our efforts to protect children. We look forward to continuing to work with you and the Committee on this important issue. If you would like to discuss this matter further, please feel free to contact me or Charlie Auer, Director of EPA's Office of Pollution Prevention and Toxics.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James B. Gulliford". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

James B. Gulliford
Assistant Administrator