



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

FEB 18 2004

Mr. Jerry A. Cook
Technical Director
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P.O. Box 2470
Callersville, GA 30120-1692

OFFICE OF
RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Re: Clarification of the Response to the Request for Correction of the IRIS Barium and Compounds Substance File (#2293A)

Dear Mr. Cook:

In a letter dated December 30, 2003, you expressed dissatisfaction with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposal to reassess the Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS) Barium and Compounds Substance File (IRIS barium file). Your letter states the proposed approach "falls short of addressing the Information Quality deficiencies in the IRIS Barium and Compounds Substance File."

The Office of Research and Development is currently preparing a work product that considers renal toxicity in rodents as the critical effect for deriving an oral reference dose (RfD) for barium and compounds. EPA intends to have an independent external peer review of this work product. The peer reviewers will be charged to determine if this approach is scientifically defensible and utilizes the best available science. The peer review panel will be conducted in accordance with EPA's guidelines and open to the public. It is our expectation that a report from the peer review panel will be completed by June 2004.

The current IRIS barium file identifies hypertension as the critical effect for deriving the RfD. If the peer review panel recommends changing the critical effect from hypertension to renal toxicity, the IRIS barium file will be reassessed under the IRIS program's agency review process. It is my hope that this letter clarifies EPA's intent to use an objective and sound scientific process to address the concerns you raised.

If you have any questions, please contact Lisa Matthews in my office at (202) 564-6669.



Paul Gilman, Ph.D.
Assistant Administrator

cc: Kim Nelson
Peter Preuss
Amy Mills
Lisa Matthews