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EPA Increases Transparency on Chemical Risk Information

Action part of continued comprehensive reform of toxic substance laws

WASHINGTON — As part of Administrator Lisa P. Jackson's commitment to strengthen and reform chemical management, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) today announced a new policy to increase the public's access to information on chemicals. Starting today, EPA has announced its intention to reject a certain type of confidentiality claim, known as Confidential Business Information (CBI), on the identity of chemicals. The chemicals that will be affected by this action are those that are submitted to EPA with studies that show a substantial risk to people's health and the environment and have been previously disclosed on the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) Chemical Inventory. This action represents another step to use the agency's authority under the existing TSCA to the fullest extent possible, recognizing EPA's strong belief that the 1976 law is both outdated and in need of reform.

"Assuring the safety of chemicals is one of Administrator Jackson's top priorities for EPA's future," said Steve Owens, assistant administrator for EPA's Office of Prevention, Pesticides and Toxic Substances. "The American people are entitled to transparent, accessible information on chemicals that may pose a risk to their health or the environment. We will continue taking steps that increase transparency and assure the safety of chemicals in our products, our environment and our bodies."

Under TSCA, companies may claim a range of sensitive, proprietary information as CBI. Under Section 8(e) of TSCA, companies that manufacture, process, or distribute chemicals are required to immediately provide notice to EPA if they learn that a chemical presents a substantial risk of injury to health or the environment. The Section 8(e) reports are made available on EPA's Web site. However, until today, companies would routinely claim confidentiality for the actual identity of the chemical covered by the Section 8(e) submission, so the public posting of the information would not include the name of the chemical. The new policy announced today ends this practice for chemicals on the public portion of the TSCA Inventory. This new policy will increase the amount of information available by granting the public access to the chemical identification information submitted, along with other health and safety data under Section 8(e).

In the coming months, EPA intends to announce additional steps to further increase transparency of chemical information.

EPA's new policy on TSCA Section 8(e) submissions is being published in the Federal Register.

More information on the new policy: <http://www.epa.gov/oppt/tsca8e/>

More information on EPA's principles for comprehensive TSCA reform:

<http://www.epa.gov/oppt/existingchemicals/pubs/principles.html>

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