



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

NOV 26 2001

OFFICE OF THE  
ADMINISTRATOR

MEMORANDUM

Honorable Raymond F. DuBois, Jr.  
Deputy Under Secretary of Defense  
Installations and Environment  
3000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington DC 20301-3000

Dear Mr. DuBois, *Ray*

Thank you for your letter of October 1, 2001 regarding the status of the next external review draft of the Agency's document entitled *Perchlorate: Toxicological Review and Risk Characterization Based on Emerging Information*.

The partnership established between EPA and DOD, first to expedite the completion of data collection efforts required to address data gaps identified by an independent peer review in March 1997, and then to address recommendations for additional studies made at the February 1999 external peer review convened by the Agency, has been positive and effective. A targeted testing strategy based on the chemical's established mode of action - disturbance of thyroid hormone economy - has turned out to be an efficient use of resources to evaluate the potential risks of a large contamination situation. Sound science will, indeed, be brought to bear on EPA regulatory decisions and policy on perchlorate.

In order to ensure the credibility of that science, however, it is requisite that our scientific staff be afforded sufficient time to evaluate and analyze the new data that are the fruits of the partnered effort on addressing peer review recommendations. The Agency committed to a second external peer review of a revised assessment that would incorporate data obtained from studies performed in response to these recommendations. By mutual agreement between DOD and EPA, all data affecting the revised assessment were to be held as pre-decisional.


Due to funding shortfalls at DOD and among other federal partners, the majority of the new data from the studies recommended in 1999 were not delivered to the Agency until June of this year, and many required additional work to obtain individual data in electronic form. One of the critical sets of data was just delivered on October 4, 2001. Now that the data have been delivered, we are aware that the DOD is anxious to move ahead with the process. I assure you that our scientists dedicated to the assessment have made this a high priority. I am sure you can appreciate how critical it is to provide adequate time for their proper analysis and internal review of the revised assessment.

The assessment will be undergoing an internal peer review in November and December of this year. The data collected by the partnership and EPA's analysis will be reviewed in their entirety by federal scientists and by a few outside scientists who are under contract to the Agency. The data and EPA's analysis will not be more broadly released until internal review of the assessment is complete. The Agency expects to release the revised assessment via the web for a 30-day public comment period in January 2002. The entirety of the relevant database, including the new studies and consultative letters from the Air Force Research Laboratory, will be made available by CD at the same time. The external peer review of the revised assessment on perchlorate is scheduled to be held in Sacramento, California during the first week of March 2002.

This time frame is aggressive given the extent of the recommendations and issues involved. Because of the issues (e.g., endocrine disruption, neurodevelopmental effects, nonlinear cancer processes) both DOD and EPA have agreed that it is in the best interest of all parties to release the data together with the new analyses. A comprehensive set of information will be the most useful to independent entities such as the Regional and state offices who are considering regulatory action requirements. As you know, State and regional entities have recently begun the process to establish clean-up levels for perchlorate in ground water based on the Agency's previous guidance and on their independent considerations. We are committed to the approach and schedule described above to ensure that any future actions have the benefit of the latest and best information and analysis.

Please feel free to have Mr. Shah Choudhury or Lt. Col. Dan Rogers contact Dr. William Farland at (202) 564-6620 or Annie Jarabek at (919) 541-4847 regarding any additional questions regarding the status of the assessment.

Sincerely,



Linda J. Fisher  
Deputy Administrator

cc: John Graham, OMB/OIRA  
Shah A. Choudhury, US AF  
✓ Lt. Col. Dan Rogers, US AF  
Terry Yonkers, US AF  
Ray Fatz, US Army  
Thomas Ledvina, US Navy  
Paul Yaroschak, US Navy  
Henry L. Longest II, EPA/ORD  
William H. Farland, EPA/ORD  
George Alapas, EPA/ORD  
Annie Jarabek, EPA/ORD  
Amy Mills, EPA/ORD