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

June 21, 2022

OFFICE OF
RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

The Honorable Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Bishop:

Thank you for your March 29, 2022, letter to Mr. Rodney Snyder, EPA's Senior Advisor for Agriculture, about the interagency science consultation period for the Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS) assessment of formaldehyde (inhalation).

EPA produces state-of-the-science assessments that are objective, transparent, and rigorous for use in decision making. IRIS assessments are the premier source of toxicity information used by EPA, other federal agencies, state and local health agencies, tribes, and international health organizations. IRIS assessments are scientific documents that focus on the first two steps of the risk assessment process: hazard identification and dose-response assessment. EPA's program and regional offices develop risk assessments by combining the hazard and dose-response conclusions from IRIS with exposure information (exposure assessment) to characterize potential public health risks (risk characterization). Formaldehyde is a hazardous air pollutant present in indoor and outdoor air. Timely development of the IRIS formaldehyde assessment is critical to supporting Agency risk assessments that further EPA's mission to protect human health and the environment.

EPA's draft assessment of formaldehyde (inhalation) provides a comprehensive systematic review of hundreds of studies on multiple noncancer health effects as well as carcinogenicity, leading to a state-of-the-science assessment and the derivation of noncancer and cancer toxicity values that may be used to support Agency decision making. The current draft implements best practice systematic review methodology and addresses prior formaldehyde-specific science recommendations. Further, the 2022 draft assessment includes an appendix that outlines the 2011 NASEM comments on the 2010 EPA draft formaldehyde assessment and summarizes EPA's responses.

Consistent with the IRIS Process, other Federal agencies and White House offices participated in a formal 4-week EPA-led interagency science consultation period that ended in January 2022, after which a meeting with all interagency reviewers was held to discuss the major comments received. Additional time was granted due to the end-of-year holidays; however, the agencies mentioned in your letter did not request additional time. In addition, federal agencies have an opportunity to provide comments on the draft assessment during the ongoing 60-day public comment period. Furthermore, there will be additional opportunities for federal agencies and others to provide comments during the subsequent external peer review, which will be conducted by the National Academies of Sciences,

Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM). In accordance with the IRIS process, following the NASEM review, EPA will revise the assessment and initiate a formal interagency science discussion period prior to disseminating a final formaldehyde (inhalation) assessment. All interagency written comments received are made publicly available on the IRIS website and in the formaldehyde docket. You should note that this assessment is still in draft form and is not yet final.

Again, thank you for your interest in the IRIS Program and its assessment of formaldehyde (inhalation). If you have further questions, please contact me or your staff may contact Christina Moody in EPA's Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations at moody.christina@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

Maureen R. Gwinn, Ph.D.
Principal Deputy Assistant Administrator
Office of Research and Development