

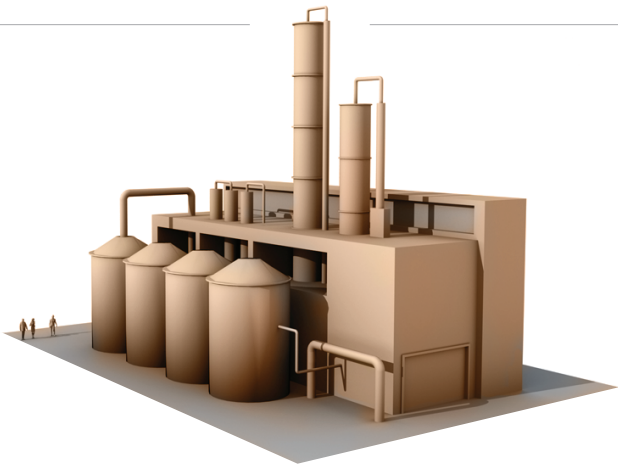
July 30, 2018

# Friends of Formaldehyde?

## How Key Political Appointees Stonewalled Warnings of Cancer-Causing Chemical

EPA has blocked an internal health assessment that might have precipitated more stringent regulations for airborne formaldehyde, POLITICO Pro's Annie Snider reports. The chemical, commonly used in composite wood products, poses risks for leukemia, nose and throat cancer and other illnesses.

Political appointees to the Trump administration's EPA have stopped the progress of a report developed by EPA's Integrated Risk Information System:



### OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR

Former administrator **Scott Pruitt** replaced academic scientists with industry advocates on the agency's influential science advisory boards.

In January, Pruitt told a Senate panel that he believed the draft assessment on formaldehyde was complete.



ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Ryan Jackson**, chief of staff of the EPA, key advisor to the administrator and principal liaison with the White House, reportedly withheld permission to initiate a review of the formaldehyde assessment.



GETTY IMAGES

Jackson was previously the chief of staff to Sen. Jim Inhofe (R-Oklahoma), who claims global warming is a hoax and once compared EPA to the Gestapo.

**Andrew Wheeler** is EPA's acting administrator. He also worked for Inhofe, who attempted to delay an earlier formaldehyde assessment. Wheeler was once a lobbyist for Celanese, a major formaldehyde manufacturer.



EPA

### SCIENCE ADVISORY BOARD

**Kimberly Wise White**, appointed to EPA's Science Advisory Board in November, leads the American Chemistry Council's Formaldehyde Panel.

In a letter to EPA officials, she said that "a premature release of a draft assessment ... will cause irreparable harm to the companies represented by the Panel ..."



AMER. CHEMISTRY COUNCIL

### OFFICE OF AIR AND RADIATION



WEHRUM — EPA



WOODS — EPA

**Bill Wehrum**, assistant administrator for OAR, was a former industry lobbyist and lawyer who sued EPA 31 times.

His deputy, **Clint Woods** was executive director of the Association of Air Pollution Control Agencies, which opposes EPA climate regulations.

Both Wehrum and Woods refused permission to initiate review of the formaldehyde assessment, and rejected invitations from scientists who wanted to brief them on the findings, according to Reuters.

### OFFICE OF CHEMICAL SAFETY AND POLLUTION PREVENTION

**Nancy Beck**, deputy assistant administrator of the OCSPP, was a vocal critic of the IRIS program in her previous job as director of regulatory science policy at the American Chemical Society.

POLITICO reports she is obstructing IRIS program assessments.



U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE CHANNEL

### OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT



AAAS

**Richard Yamada**, deputy assistant administrator for ORD, is a former staffer for the House Committee on Science, Space and Technology under Chairman Lamar Smith (R-Texas).

Reuters reported in May that Yamada met with American Chemical Society lobbyists, who argued that linking formaldehyde exposure to leukemia was scientifically indefensible. POLITICO reports Yamada is helping prevent the formaldehyde assessment from moving forward.

### NATIONAL CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

#### The IRIS process

The Integrated Risk Information System is an EPA program that evaluates scientific studies on how environmental contaminants — such as formaldehyde — affect human health. The evaluations provide a scientific foundation for risk assessment, the first step in what could lead to a variety of regulatory actions. Such assessments, which have been streamlined to last for about two years, may also be used for litigation in contaminant exposure cases.

#### 1a SCOPING

- EPA selects substances for IRIS assessment based on information from the public and from the agency's regional and program offices. Several factors influence the selection:
- Potential effects to public health
- Statutory, regulatory or program-specific needs
- New scientific information
- Interest to other governmental agencies or the public
- Availability of other scientific assessments

#### 1b DRAFT DEVELOPMENT

- Identification and evaluation of pertinent scientific literature
- Selection of studies for use in deriving toxicity values
- Development of a draft toxicological review

#### 2 AGENCY REVIEW

- Health scientists in EPA's program and regional offices review draft.

Formaldehyde assessment process halted before being reviewed by the National Academy of Sciences.

#### 3 INTERAGENCY SCIENCE CONSULTATION

- Other federal agencies and the executive office of the president review the draft.

#### 4 PUBLIC COMMENT AND EXTERNAL PEER REVIEW

- Assessment is released for public comment and for external peer review and comment.

#### 5 ASSESSMENT REVISION

- IRIS revises toxicological assessment to address public comments and external peer review.

#### 6 FINAL AGENCY REVIEW, INTERAGENCY SCIENCE DISCUSSION

- EPA health scientists discuss assessment with scientists from other federal agencies and with the executive office of the president.

#### 7 POSTING OF FINAL ASSESSMENT ON IRIS WEBSITE

- The report includes chronic health hazard assessments for both cancer effects and noncancer effects, and estimates levels below which there are no appreciable risks during a lifetime of either chronic oral exposure or chronic inhalation exposure. Also included is a bibliography of all studies considered in the assessment.

EPA's latest IRIS toxicological assessment of formaldehyde was last revised in 1990. It lists no **reference concentration for chronic inhalation exposure**, which is an estimate of the levels of formaldehyde in the air a person can inhale over their lifetime without any health risks. EPA's website says it is currently revising its IRIS assessment of formaldehyde, but lists no actions since a 2014 workshop.

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