Worries Mount Over New EU Regs

'Overly expansive, burdensome and difficult to implement.' &#151USTR spokesman describing REACH

It is too soon to speculate about whether concerns over the European Union's proposed regulations for the chemical industry could result in formal complaints under trade pacts, according to a recent statement made by a spokesman for the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative. "It would be premature to say this is headed for a dispute resolution panel," the spokesman said, speaking on condition of anonymity. "I can't speculate whether it will result in a WTO (World Trade Organization) case." The spokesman said the U.S. will continue to monitor developments in the progress of the proposed EU regulatory system, which he described as "overly expansive, burdensome and difficult to implement." International worries about the proposed Registration, Evaluation, Authorization and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH) legislation came to a head last month when the U.S. and 12 other countries issued a joint statement expressing their concerns. The statement coincided with an event, organized by the American Chamber of Commerce to the European Union in Brussels, entitled "REACH: Key Issues for Trading Partners." The other countries backing the statement were Japan, India, Canada, Australia, Israel, Mexico, Brazil, Malaysia, Chile, South Africa, Korea and Thailand. The statement highlighted serious concerns with REACH's workability, its potentially disruptive effects on international trade and a perception that Third World concerns have not been heard. The U.S. Ambassador to the EU, C. Boyden Gray, complained in particular about the self-serving nature of some input into REACH and the secrecy surrounding the decision-making process. "Impact assessments should be used to inform policy, not justify decisions taken. To use impact assessments in an ex-post manner just defeats the purpose," he said. However, he did not cite any specific example, according to a transcript of his remarks issued by the U.S. Embassy. Gray called for EU deliberations on environmental regulations, including REACH, to be open to the public, adding that "stakeholders should not have to depend on leaks" to be able to review documents.

Source URL (retrieved on *12/13/2013 - 4:50am*):
http://www.chem.info/news/2006/08/worries-mount-over-new-eu-regs?qt-most_popular=1