New System Proposed to Prioritize Chemicals for Review

WASHINGTON, Sep. 6, 2011 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- As part of its longstanding support for updating the nation's chemical regulatory system, the American Chemistry Council (ACC) today proposed a comprehensive, scientifically based prioritization system that could be used by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to determine which chemicals warrant additional review and assessment.

"As outlined in ACC's principles for modernizing the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA), establishing a clear and scientifically-sound prioritization process is key to creating a world-class chemical management system," said ACC President and CEO Cal Dooley. "We believe the prioritization tool we're proposing today will help EPA evaluate chemicals more efficiently and effectively and improve public confidence in the agency's regulation of chemicals."

The 35-year-old TSCA law does not dictate a process to utilize the information currently available to prioritize chemicals for review.

Without a system in place, EPA may be wasting time, energy and resources gathering and analyzing data on chemicals that are already well-understood or that are unlikely to pose a significant risk to public health or the environment.

"ACC worked closely with experts from our member companies to develop a tool that will enable the public, public health officials, lawmakers and businesses to understand better which chemicals and uses warrant priority evaluation by EPA, and which do not," said Mike Walls, ACC Vice President of Regulatory and Technical Affairs.

ACC's approach evaluates chemicals against transparent, consistent and scientific criteria that take into account both hazard and exposure.

Chemicals are given a score based on the criteria and then ranked based on their scores and the agency's best professional scientific judgment. The rankings would then be used to determine which chemicals should be referred to EPA's Office of Chemical Safety & Pollution Prevention for further assessment.

The specific criteria that would be applied to determine a chemical's priority ranking addresses human health hazards, potential environmental effects, a chemical's industrial, commercial and/or consumer uses, whether it persists or accumulates in the body or the environment, and the production volume of the chemical in commerce.

The tool also takes into account important factors like whether a chemical is used in

children's products or detected in biomonitoring programs.

ACC's prioritization tool is intended to be administered by the EPA to identify priority chemicals for further evaluation and assessment.

The tool is not intended to produce conclusions about which chemicals necessarily present a risk to human health or environment. Before today's announcement, representatives from ACC met with officials at EPA to discuss the tool and how it could inform the agency's stakeholder dialogue on prioritization taking place Sept. 7.

"We are glad that EPA has recognized the urgent need to prioritize chemicals for review," said Dooley. "ACC welcomes the opportunity to participate in tomorrow's dialogue and hopes EPA will utilize our concepts to develop a consistent and transparent prioritization process."

SOURCE: American Chemistry Council

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