



Dear Madame/Sir,

In December of 2003, the United States and Canada launched a bilateral “Consultations on Substance Management” (COSM) meeting at the U.S. Deputy Assistant Administrator and Canadian Assistant Deputy Minister level. We have found our meetings to be a very productive forum where chemical issues of mutual interest are addressed. To date, our agendas have included a wide spectrum of bilateral interests ranging from voluntary partnerships to regulatory actions, and we attempt to dedicate at least half of each meeting to international issues, such as the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM).

One of the items that has been on our agenda since the inception of this ongoing policy discussion is the sharing of data during the new chemical assessment process, based on interest expressed in the past by both U.S. and Canadian chemical companies. Our interest is in providing an information-exchange process for participants that works smoothly and efficiently to meet the needs of all parties. After much discussion, we have come to the conclusion that there are various steps in the review of a new chemical that the governments can take to facilitate sharing of information during the process.

We would like to take this opportunity to inform you of a parallel activity by the New Chemicals Task Force of the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). In looking for ways to increase the mutual understanding and acceptance of hazard assessments, that group is now piloting a new chemicals notification process called the “Parallel Process.” The Parallel Process involves a notification process whereby a company would submit the same notification package to two or more countries. The process has the potential to reduce government and industry resource burdens, increase transparency in decision making, and improve information transfer without compromising environmental and human health protection. No confidential business information of the notifier will be disclosed to the public without the consent of the notifier except in conformity with the laws of the reviewing countries.

Broadly speaking, the pilot phase of the Parallel Process consists of 4 major phases:

- 1) a pre-notification phase, during which the notifier and participating countries (as selected by the notifier) strive to mutually agree on the requirements for the technical material to be included in the submission;

- 2) notification to the lead country (which is selected by the notifier and agreed to by the selected country) during which time the lead country will initiate their review process and develop a draft hazard assessment;
- 3) the draft hazard assessment is shared with the secondary countries, participating countries then work to develop a collaborative hazard assessment, and the industry subsequently provides notifications to these secondary countries to start each country's formal review process; and
- 4) using the collaborative hazard assessment, each participating country makes a national decision on the notification.

In order to maximize participation and benefit from the discussions on the pilot project, we would be pleased to meet with you, perhaps in conjunction with future scheduled chemical industry/trade association meetings in Canada and the United States. We would use those opportunities to provide industry with information on the Parallel Process, including overall objectives and benefits for participants.

Please inform us of your interest, and possible meeting dates where we could present the Parallel Process to you. To do so, or if you have any questions, please contact Anna Coutlakis in the U.S. at 202-564-9207 or email: coutlakis.anna@epa.gov. In Canada, you may contact Jonathan Tigner at 819-953-7156 or email: NSN-infoline@ec.gc.ca. We look forward to your participation in the pilot project.

Sincerely,

Original Signed By

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