

June 25, 2024

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
Chairman, Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment, and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Simpson
Chairman, Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment, and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
2007 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment, and Related Agencies
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chellie Pingree
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment, and Related Agencies
2007 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Merkley, Ranking Member Murkowski, Chairman Simpson, and Ranking Member Pingree:

As you continue work on the Fiscal Year 2025 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies bill we urge you to address an important issue impacting American jobs and economic competitiveness. Specifically, the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Integrated Risk Information System program (IRIS), which is being used to develop overly burdensome regulations on critical chemistries essential for products we use every day.

IRIS has never been authorized by Congress, yet the chemical assessments it develops are increasingly being used to justify restrictive regulations. Some recent examples include:

- **Formaldehyde Risk Evaluation:** A risk evaluation for formaldehyde under the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) relies on a flawed draft IRIS value and proposes an unreasonably low workplace standard below background levels.
 - Members of the EPA's Science Advisory Committee on Chemicals (SACC) recently raised serious concerns over EPA's reliance on IRIS.
- **EPA Air Rules on Ethylene Oxide:** This rule affects critical industries like electric vehicles, semiconductor manufacturing, and health care. The rule relies on a deeply flawed IRIS value for ethylene oxide that is 23,000 times lower than naturally occurring levels in the human body.

CC: The Honorable Patty Murray, The Honorable Susan Collins, The Honorable Tom Cole, The Honorable Rosa DeLauro

- **Biden Administration DOJ Action:** An IRIS value for chloroprene was used to justify emergency action seeking to shut down a manufacturing facility under Section 303 of the Clean Air Act.
- **Draft IRIS Toxicological Review of Inorganic Arsenic:** Finds unsubstantiated risk 54 times lower than the current dose response level. If finalized as drafted, the risk values could be used to drive new regulatory levels for inorganic arsenic that are significantly lower than the background levels of arsenic in soil and water in many states with impacts to soil remediation programs, drinking water standards, crops and other food supplies.

It is essential that regulations be based on the best available science. However, IRIS has often fallen short of that standard. IRIS fails to adequately incorporate all available quality science and consistently utilize a “weight of the scientific evidence” approach. Also, the process IRIS uses to prioritize and select chemicals for assessment that lacks transparency.

In recent years, bipartisan Members of Congress have raised concerns about IRIS, introducing legislation like the Sound Science for Farmers Act (S. 3719) and the No IRIS Act (S. 3724/H.R. 7284). Despite direction from Congress, EPA has not fully implemented recommendations identified by the National Academy of Sciences in 2011 and 2014.

The appropriations process is one of the few opportunities to address the problems with IRIS. Therefore, we ask for you to consider including limitations on the funding for IRIS and report language directing EPA to address significant problems with the program, similar to what was passed in the FY24 House-passed Interior appropriations bill (H.R. 4821).

We appreciate your consideration and look forward to working with you and your staff on this important issue. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

American Chemistry Council
U.S. Chamber of Commerce
The Fertilizer Institute
Adhesive and Sealant Council
Agricultural Retailers Association
Alliance for Chemical Distribution
American Coatings Association
American Feed Industry Association
American Forest and Paper Association
American Foundry Society
American Home Furnishings Alliance

American Fuel and Petrochemical Manufacturers
AmericanHort
American Petroleum Institute
American Wood Council
Asphalt Roofing Manufacturers Association
Communications Cable and Connectivity Association
Composite Panel Association
Decorative Hardwoods Association
Florida Tropical Fish Farms Association
Hawaii Aquaculture and Aquaponics Association
Independent Lubricant Manufacturers Association
Institute of Makers of Explosives
International Wood Products Association
Kitchen Cabinet Manufacturers Association
Lawn & Horticultural Products Workgroup
Louisiana Chemical Association
Ohio AgriBusiness Association
National Association of Manufacturers
National Aquaculture Association
National Funeral Directors Association
National Mining Association
National Wood Flooring Association
Non-Ferrous Founders' Society
North Carolina Manufacturers Alliance
Northwest Aquaculture Alliance
Polyisocyanurate Insulation Manufacturers Association
Society of Chemical Manufacturers and Affiliates
Steel Founders' Society of America
The Toy Association
USA Rice

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