

**EPN COMMENTS FOR THE ASBESTOS DISEASE AWARENESS ORGANIZATION
(ADAO) PRESS CONFERENCE REGARDING THE DRAFT ASBESTOS RISK
EVALUATION UNDER TSCA**

May 28, 2020

Good afternoon. My name is Penelope Fenner-Crisp. Today, I will be presenting comments on behalf of the Environmental Protection Network (EPN), an organization comprised of more than 500 U.S. EPA alumni volunteering their time to protect the integrity of EPA, human health, and the environment. During my 22-year career at EPA, I served as a senior toxicologist in the drinking water program and as a senior executive and science advisor in the toxic substances and pesticide programs.

Three Areas of Concern:

- 1) Scope of the Draft Risk Evaluation (three topics)
 - a) When EPA began their assessments of chemicals under the new Existing Chemicals program, they were planning to exclude evaluation of legacy uses, which, in this case, encompass all forms of asbestos. EPA is now obligated to assess legacy uses and has stated that they plan to address the other forms in a supplemental document. EPN recommended that this assessment proceed with all deliberate speed and that it include evaluation of all fiber types including chrysotile. Much of the available literature on asbestos does/cannot distinguish between fiber types, so attempting to parse toxicity profiles among them is not necessarily a useful exercise.
 - b) EPA's cancer risk assessment included only lung cancer and mesotheliomas. The National Academy of Sciences (NAS) and the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) have concluded that laryngeal cancer is causally related to asbestos exposure. IARC has concluded the same for ovarian cancer. EPN recommended that EPA's cancer risk assessment be expanded to include an analysis of the data on these two tumor sites, with an emphasis on their adequacy to support dose-response assessment and the potential for inclusion in the calculation of the combined inhalation unit risk (IUR).
 - c) EPA did not conduct an analysis of non-cancer adverse health effects associated with exposure to asbestos.

Their justification is based upon the comparison of the 2014 Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS) non-cancer reference concentration (RfC) for Libby amphibole asbestos with the 1988 generic asbestos IUR for cancer risks. In this case, the cancer toxicity value is the clear risk driver.

But, this conclusion is relevant ONLY to the general population to which a 1×10^{-6} standard applies; it may not be applicable to the worker standard of 1×10^{-4} , a difference of 100-fold. Furthermore, an RfC for chrysotile may not be equal to, or higher than, that for Libby amphibole. Lastly, the agency has proposed an IUR for chrysotile that is about 1/3 lower (that is, less conservative) when compared with the 1988 asbestos value. And, that may change if the data on laryngeal and/or ovarian cancer are integrated into it. The interplay of these three factors is unknown but could result in a flipping of the risk driver from cancer to a non-cancer effect or, more likely, lead to an underestimation of the overall health risks of asbestos exposure based on cancer alone. We won't know unless and until an analysis of the non-cancer effects is conducted.

2) Risk Management

EPA narrowed the scope of this risk evaluation by taking several exclusionary steps. Nonetheless, they concluded that most of the Conditions of Use examined posed an unreasonable risk.

That makes the regulatory options narrow and simple, too: Vacate the Significant New Use Rule (SNUR) and issue a ban on all forms of asbestos. Thirty years is more than enough time to develop alternatives for the uses that were not previously phased out.

3) Continuing Issues that Apply to all Risk Evaluations (three topics)

a) EPA's assumption of consistent use of PPE when making risk determinations:

EPN (and others) argue risk determinations should be made based upon no PPE.

b) Continued use of flawed, non-peer-reviewed systematic review guidance

c) Lastly, continued non-compliance with agency's peer review guidance

Every Science Advisory Committee on Chemicals (SACC) meeting has been scheduled in the middle of the public comment period, short-changing the public in their opportunity to provide substantive feedback to the peer reviewers.