



Statement

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ACC: NATIONAL ACADEMIES MISSED A CRITICAL OPPORTUNITY WITH IRIS REVIEW

WASHINGTON (April 13, 2018) – *The American Chemistry Council (ACC) released the following statement regarding the recent National Academy of Sciences' (NAS) Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS) 2018 Evaluation:*

“The NAS committee has missed a critical opportunity to offer recommendations that could improve the scientific rigor of future IRIS assessments because the official scope of the committee’s assessment was so severely limited. ACC had little expectation the committee would be able to properly evaluate the progress the agency has made to address past NAS recommendations. We expressed this concern in our Dec. comments prior to the workshop and again in a letter to the committee following the Feb. workshop.

“NAS was tasked with reviewing proposed IRIS changes based on what EPA presented in a 1.5-day workshop. Unfortunately, EPA staff elected to provide only PowerPoint presentations that offered few details on the specific practices being used and did not include the review of any actual examples of completed assessments reflecting all the changes IRIS has made.

“While the report commends IRIS staff on the progress to implement systematic review as presented in its PowerPoint slides, the fact remains the agency has yet to produce any meaningful products (e.g., a finalized IRIS handbook, a draft IRIS assessment that reflects the new systematic review approach) based on the changes it says it has made. The absence of these critical pieces of information, after years of opportunity by EPA to address the 2011 and 2014 NAS recommendations, clearly indicates that much work still remains before IRIS assessments meet the benchmark of a gold standard review expected by the scientific community.

“Among those recommendations was generating a robust handbook that lays out the process and procedures the agency utilizes to develop an IRIS assessment, which the agency still has not produced. It also remains unclear how the IRIS program evaluates and incorporates mode of action information to draw conclusions regarding human health hazard. Additionally, the agency did not address how it will acknowledge and incorporate public comments and peer review.

“EPA chemical assessment programs, like IRIS, must meet objective and transparent standards for evaluating chemical risks. ACC continues to be disappointed in the lack of transparency of the IRIS program in providing written protocols and guidance documents that clearly describe how the



agency evaluates the quality of scientific evidence and integrates human, animal and mechanistic data to draw scientifically defensible conclusions regarding human health risk.

“While IRIS staff presented some promising improvements during the workshop, the agency must put those changes into action by producing chemical assessments in a way that is transparent to the public, timely and reflective of the best current scientific methodologies. We look forward to working with Congress and EPA to improve the IRIS program so that it will one day be able to produce high-quality, scientifically sound chemical assessments.”

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