



COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE, SPACE, & TECHNOLOGY
Lamar Smith, Chairman

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Media Contacts: Heather Vaughan, Bridget Dunn
(202) 225-6371

Statement from Chairman Andy Biggs (R-Ariz.)

Markup of H.R. 6468

Chairman Biggs: Thank you, Mr. Chairman for the opportunity to speak on behalf of my bill, H.R. 6468, the Improving Science in Chemical Assessments Act.

This legislation ensures that chemical assessments conducted by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will be transparent, reliable, and useful for program offices to carry out EPA's core mission of protecting human health and the environment.

Specifically, the bill will eliminate EPA's flawed Integrated Risk Information System, or IRIS, and return the responsibility of conducting hazard identification and dose response assessments to the agency's program offices, which are best situated to perform the work.

Without any foundation in law or direction from Congress, EPA administratively created the IRIS program in 1985 to "foster consistency" in chemical assessments conducted by EPA. Unfortunately, IRIS has evolved into a program plagued by inefficiencies and a lack of transparency, resulting in questionable science that can have a significant impact on the marketplace.

When IRIS assigns a toxicity value to a chemical, federal, state, and local regulatory authorities use it to make rules and regulations that can impact commerce. While in practice the program does not have any regulatory authority, the assessments produced by the program can still have a negative impact on the economy similar to the effect of regulation.

Over the past year, the Environment Subcommittee has conducted a hearing, hosted briefings with the EPA, met with stakeholders, and worked with our colleagues to learn more about the IRIS program. It has become very apparent that the program has lost its way.

H.R. 6468 will address the problems of the program by ensuring that any future chemical assessments performed are tailored to the regulatory need of the relevant EPA program office. Let me be clear: chemical toxicity assessments will still be performed by the agency. They will just be performed by the program offices rather

than IRIS. These future assessments will be stored in a publicly accessible Chemical Assessment Database, which will also retain the existing IRIS assessments.

Most importantly, this legislation promotes reliability in chemical hazard identification and dose response assessments by ensuring they will be carried out using the best available science and based on the weight of the scientific evidence. H.R. 6468 requires that the EPA meet stringent scientific standards when assessing any given chemical by considering the relevance of the data, the uncertainty in the scientific information, the extent to which it has been peer reviewed, and whether the findings are reproducible.

Lastly, the bill creates a chemical hazard identification and dose response steering committee, chaired by the Office of Research and Development, to prevent duplication of work performed by the program offices. The steering committee will also be authorized to consider third-party assessments as a supplement to the work being performed by the program offices provided that the third-party assessments meet the scientific standards outlined in the bill.

H.R. 6468 is common-sense legislation that will re-focus EPA science back to its core mission. I want to thank Chairman Smith, Vice Chairman Lucas, Environment Subcommittee Vice Chairman Norman, and Representatives Rohrabacher, Posey, Weber, Babin, Higgins, Lesko, Hultgren, Abraham, Webster, Marshall, and Dunn for co-sponsoring this important legislation. I encourage the rest of my colleagues to support this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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