

Fact Sheet on WV TAP Expert Panel

Background

This meeting of an independent expert peer review panel has been organized by Toxicology Excellence for Risk Assessment (TERA). TERA is an independent non-profit organization whose mission is to support the protection of public health by developing, reviewing, and communicating risk assessment values and analyses, improving risk methods through research, and educating risk assessors and managers and the public on risk assessment issues. TERA has organized and conducted peer reviews for private and government sponsors since 1996 (see <http://www.tera.org/Peer/index.html> for information about TERA's program).

Peer review is an essential part of science—peer review is the evaluation of scientific work by others working in the same field. Evaluation by a diverse group of independent “peers,” provides for a scientifically robust and objective appraisal of the work.

TERA has selected and convened a panel of five experts to review and discuss the available toxicology data and the scientific support for the West Virginia Screening Level established at 10 parts per billion (ppb). The panel will discuss the initial starting value of 1 part per million (1,000 ppb) established by the US CDC and then consider if the additional safety factor applied by the State of West Virginia was protective of public health, based on available data. The panel will identify data gaps and make recommendations for additional studies or analyses that could strengthen the screening level and reduce uncertainty. The expert panel will seek to reach consensus or common agreement on the scientific issues and conclusions.

The panel will draw upon the scientific review document authored by Utah State University Professor Craig Adams. The document can be found on the WV TAP website and is entitled *Health Effects for Chemicals in 2014 West Virginia Chemical Release: Crude MCHM Compounds, PPH and DiPPH. Version 1.5*. The document provides a literature review summarizing toxicity information on the chemicals that were spilled into the Elk River in West Virginia in January 2014 from the Freedom Industries facility.

In the spirit of the Expert Panel's independence and mission, it would not be appropriate for the experts to discuss the subject of this review publically before they deliberate as a group and finalize their report.

Independent Expert Review Panel

The independent peer review panel includes five scientists who have expertise in the key disciplines and areas of concern. Each panelist is a well-respected scientist in his or her field. The panel has training and experience in the various scientific disciplines involved in evaluating the safety of chemicals in water. Collectively, the panel members are experts in toxicology, derivation of screening levels, human health risk assessment, and water contaminants and systems. They have experience in academia, government, research, and non-profit sectors, which will provide a diversity of perspectives in the discussions. TERA questioned each candidate on their relationships with interested parties, to identify any potential conflicts of interest. TERA was solely responsible for the selection of the panel members. The experts serve as individual scientists and will represent their own personal scientific opinions. They

are not representing their companies, agencies, funding organizations, or other entities with which they are associated. Affiliations are for identification purposes only.

- Dr. Michael Dourson, Toxicology Excellence for Risk Assessment, Cincinnati, Ohio USA
- Dr. Shai Ezra, Mekorot, Israel National Water Company Ltd, Tel Aviv, Israel
- Dr. James Jacobus, Minnesota Department of Health, Saint Paul, Minnesota USA
- Dr. Stephen Roberts, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida USA
- Dr. Paul Rumsby, National Centre for Environmental Toxicology at WRc plc, United Kingdom

Review Package and Charge to Peer Reviewers

In preparation for the meeting, the expert panel reviewed the Adams et al. literature review and pertinent references. TERA provided the panel with a list of key questions (the “charge to peer reviewers”) to help focus the discussions. The charge questions are briefly described below:

- Given data now available, what would be appropriate screening levels for MCHM and PPH in drinking water?
- What additional data, analyses, or studies might reduce uncertainty and provide greater confidence?
- How should the presence of multiple chemicals in the release to the Elk River be considered?
- Are the screening values protective for all potential routes of exposures (i.e., ingestion, dermal and inhalation)?
- Please identify any additional scientific issues or questions that the panel should discuss.

Meeting Report

The consensus opinion of the panel as a whole is the valuable result of this expert review. Preliminary conclusions from the panel’s discussions will be reported on April 1. TERA will draft a meeting report that summarizes the expert panel’s discussions and conclusions, and this report will serve as the record of the peer review. The draft report will be reviewed by the panel members for accuracy and completeness and the final report will be approved by the panel before it is released. The goal is to have the final report complete by the end of April.

Press Conference, April 1, 2014

A press conference to present preliminary conclusions will be held Tuesday, April 1 at West Virginia State University in Institute, West Virginia. Similar to the March 28 public meeting, the Expert Panel press conference will be held in the Ferrell Hall Auditorium. The auditorium, on the 2nd floor of Ferrell Hall, has theatre style audience seating for 400 persons on the lower level and 200 persons in the balcony. The event will begin at 10:00 AM EDT and conclude at approximately 11:00 AM EDT.

Organizations interested in participating in the April 1 event should contact Dr. Andrew Whelton at ajwhelton@southalabama.edu.