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# Press Advisory

For Release Monday, October 5, 1998.

Following are some agency developments which may interest you. If you need more information on any of these subjects, call the appropriate contact.

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## ENDOCRINE DISRUPTORS

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To protect human health and the environment, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency today moved toward a screening program that for the first time ever will evaluate certain health and environmental effects of some 15,000 chemicals used in thousands of common products, ranging from pesticides to plastics. The Agency accepted final recommendations from an independent advisory group of nationally recognized scientists, public health experts, industry representatives and others that call for a program to identify and characterize chemicals known as "endocrine disruptors." These chemicals have been shown to result in developmental and reproductive abnormalities in wildlife, and are suspected by some scientists of causing adverse health effects in humans, including birth defects, breast cancer, prostate cancer and infertility.

Now that these recommendations have been received from the Endocrine Screening and Testing Advisory Committee (EDSTAC), the Agency will formally propose its screening and testing program by the end of the year. "Science has only recently come to understand the possible threats posed to public health from endocrine disruptors. The national screening program recommended by the committee is a critical first step in our efforts to identify any health threats from these substances and ensure that human health and the environment are protected," said EPA Administrator Carol M. Browner.

Based on the committee's recommendations, EPA plans to establish its screening program by initially focusing on 15,000 chemicals, which are produced in volumes exceeding 10,000 pounds per year, and for which existing test data is limited. EPA plans to submit these chemicals to a series of high throughput pre-screening (HTPS) assays, which would help the agency prioritize the chemicals for additional screening. Chemicals that test negative in the screening assays may not need further testing. However, chemicals that test positive would be subject to a series of additional tests, including specific tests to determine their reproductive, developmental and behavioral effects.

Currently, EPA is working to scientifically validate the HTPS assays recommended by the EDSTAC as a first step toward constructing its screening and testing program for suspected endocrine disruptors. In addition, the agency is considering all other recommendations detailed in the EDSTAC report. These include the need to address the effects of endocrine disruptors on ecological systems and in wildlife and the testing needs

of chemical combinations. EPA also is reviewing new and existing screening tests and the mechanisms available for validating these tests.

EPA established EDSTAC in 1996, following enactment of the Food Quality Protection Act and the Safe Drinking Water Act. Both laws contain provisions directing EPA to establish a screening and testing program for chemicals suspected of disrupting the endocrine system. The purpose of EDSTAC was to provide the Agency with guidance in the design of this program.

After publishing its proposed screening and testing program at the end of the year, EPA will request comments from the public on it. The public can order the report from EPA's TSCA Hotline at 202-554-1404. The report can also be viewed and downloaded from the Internet at: <http://www.epa.gov/opptintr/opptendo>.

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