

# The EPA's Endocrine Disruptor Screening Program: **INHUMANE AND INEFFECTIVE**

What will the most massive government-sponsored chemical-testing program in history yield? Reams of uninterpretable data, the waste of an enormous amount of time and money that could instead be spent protecting the public from known hazards, and millions upon millions of dead animals in laboratories.

## **ANOTHER TOXIC BLUNDER**

Oblivious to the suffering of millions of animals in laboratories, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) wants to implement its endocrine disruptor screening program (EDSP)—a poorly conceived plan to evaluate the effects of industrial chemicals on the human hormonal (endocrine) system by looking at the reproductive organs of animals.

The EDSP has been denounced by international scientists as “blindly stupid” and “appalling toxicology” because it calls for force-feeding massive doses of pesticides and industrial chemicals to animals in an attempt to mimic the effects on humans of long-term, low-level exposure to possible endocrine-disrupting chemicals. The EPA plans to test 5,000 to 87,000 chemicals using, according to scientific estimates, as many as 1.2 million animals for every 1,000 chemicals tested.

The EDSP is a result of Congress' 1996 Food Quality Protection Act, which deals mostly with limiting pesticide-residue levels in food. The act contains a small section on endocrine disruptors, and once in the hands

of the EPA, this section of the law quickly turned into the largest proposed animal-testing program of all time.

The tests that the EPA wants to use to examine the interaction between chemicals and the human endocrine system have been severely criticized by a number of scientists. Numerous reports, including the National Academy of Sciences' exhaustive 1999 study, cite the enormous differences between animal and human endocrine systems. Other recently published reports indicate that even different breeds of the same animals used in laboratory experiments exhibit drastically different responses during endocrine disruptor testing. Even minor changes in study conditions, such as whether animals are housed alone or in groups and the relative position of the animals in the womb before birth, have been shown to significantly alter endocrine disruptor test data.

The EPA is disregarding the recommendations of its own advisory committee to develop a non-animal test method known as the “high throughput screen” that could rapidly screen out chemicals that are not in need of further testing, thus greatly reducing the number of animals killed. And as usual, the EPA is not requiring the same rigorous proof of reliability and relevance for the animal tests that is required of all non-animal tests.

While scientists generally agree that certain adverse health effects on wildlife are the result of high-level

exposures to environmental pollution, the EDSP focuses on human health concerns, not the wildlife concerns. Yet the EPA is bypassing the recommendations of the National Academy of Sciences that epidemiological studies and short-term biomonitoring studies be conducted on human populations to determine the nature and extent of the problem in humans.

Dr. John Giesy, professor of environmental toxicology and a member of the National Academy of Sciences, states, "Legislating endocrine testing at this time is unbelievably stupid and a waste of resources." A top government scientist states, "Twenty years from now, we will have killed millions of animals, spent millions of dollars, and we still won't know how endocrine disruptors affect humans. We need to take a step back and focus on what the problem is in humans."

Yet the director of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences' Laboratory of Toxicology states that "due to commitments by laboratories and government agencies and the availability of funding, the program will proceed, *justified or not.*"



## WHAT YOU CAN DO

- The EPA's animal-testing program must be stopped. Contact your members of Congress and ask them to hold oversight hearings on the EDSP to ensure that the EPA:
  - (1) replaces animal tests with non-animal tests
  - (2) uses the recommended non-animal "high throughput screen" before conducting any other testing
  - (3) uses the same rigorous validation procedure through the Interagency Coordinating Committee on the Validation of Alternative Methods for both non-animal and animal tests
- To find out who your senators and congressional representative are and how to reach them, call the Capitol switchboard at 202-224-3121.

Also, please contact President George W. Bush and ask him to reexamine this massive animal-testing plan. Tell him that you want the EPA to start protecting people and the environment from known hazardous chemicals and to stop demanding endless new animal tests:

The Honorable George W. Bush  
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The White House  
Washington, DC 20500  
Tel.: 202-456-1414  
Fax: 202-456-2461  
E-Mail: [president@whitehouse.gov](mailto:president@whitehouse.gov)

- Visit our Web site at [PETA.org](http://PETA.org) for more information.



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