

GEORGE E. BROWN, JR.

RANKING DEMOCRATIC MEMBER,
COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE
MEMBER,
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
DEAN,
CALIFORNIA DEMOCRATIC
CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0542

42ND DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

2300 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-0542
(202) 225-6161
657 NORTH LA CADENA DRIVE
COLTON, CA 92324-2822
(924) 925-2472

December 22, 1998

Ms. Carol Browner
Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency
401 M Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator *Carol* Browner:

On October 9, the Chemical Manufacturer's Association, the Environmental Defense Fund and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced a joint program to test approximately 2,800 high production volume (HPV) chemicals in the United States. These chemicals are annually manufactured or imported in volumes in excess of one million pounds in this country. Many are already known to be hazardous. At this time, the agreement is for voluntary compliance by industry to provide test plans for these chemicals by December, 1999, after which EPA will require tests of the remaining chemicals. The deadline for companies to sign up for voluntary compliance has been moved to mid-March, 1999.

The goal of the testing program—to obtain concrete information on chemicals in significant distribution, is laudable. However, the process for implementing the program is a concern. The program announcement in early October appeared with limited public input. Stakeholders with a commitment to animal welfare, manufacturers of alternative test methods, and members of Congress did not have an opportunity to raise specific points. For example, serious concerns recently have been raised that ample data already exist for many of the chemicals on EPA's list. Other concerns relate to the databases selected for initial review, the lack of integration of alternative methods into the program, and the welfare of millions of animals to be used in the testing program.

In the 105th Congress, I joined sixty-three of my colleagues in the House in co-sponsorship of the "ICCVAM Authorization Act," H.R. 3946. The bill builds on language in the NIH Revitalization Act of 1993, directing the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences to "develop and validate assays and protocols, including alternative methods that can reduce or eliminate the use of animals in acute or chronic safety testing" and "establish criteria for the validation and regulatory acceptance of alternative testing and to recommend a process through which scientifically validated alternative methods can be accepted for regulatory use."

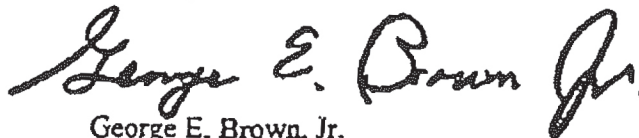
Administrator Browner
December 22, 1998
Page 2.

The Inter-Agency Coordinating Committee for the Validation of Alternative Methods (ICCVAM), comprised of fifteen federal agencies including the EPA, is the vehicle for facilitating the approval and acceptance of these proposed alternative methods. H.R. 3946 ensures that ICCVAM becomes a standing committee and that federal agencies must incorporate alternative methods wherever possible. Unfortunately, as currently outlined, the program relies heavily on animal models, without any consideration of often faster, less expensive alternative methods or animal welfare.

I urge the EPA to respond to the concerns of all stakeholders in the HPV program—by moving the voluntary compliance deadline, in order to utilize ICCVAM to facilitate the integration of validated alternative methods.

Please keep me informed as to any progress you may be able to achieve in this matter. If you have any questions or comments, Patrick Quinlan in my Washington office, at (202) 225-6161, is available to address them.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "George E. Brown Jr." The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

George E. Brown, Jr.
MEMBER OF CONGRESS