Message

From: Dunn, Alexandra [dunn.alexandra@epa.gov]
Sent: 9/11/2019 1:04:35 AM
To: Schiermeyer, Corry [schiermeyer.corry@epa.gov]
CC: Dunlap, David [dunlap.david@epa.gov]; Orme-Zavaleta, Jennifer [Orme-Zavaleta.Jennifer@epa.gov]; Bolen, Derrick [bolen.derrick@epa.gov]; Bennett, Tate [Bennett.Tate@epa.gov]; Abboud, Michael [abboud.michael@epa.gov]; Block, Molly [block.molly@epa.gov]; McFaul, Jessica [mcfaul.jessica@epa.gov]
Subject: Re: 9.10.19 Animal Testing clips

Thanks everyone for the collective excellence!!!

Alexandra Dapolito Dunn, Esq.
Assistant Administrator
Office of Chemical Safety & Pollution Prevention
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Washington, DC

Sent from my iPhone

On Sep 10, 2019, at 6:13 PM, Schiermeyer, Corry <schiermeyer.corry@epa.gov> wrote:

Hello Team,

Thank you all for the hard work on getting this across the goal line, so to speak. I know you all have more work to do to meet the goals, but I believe we will be successful. We had some good news out of this, and the Administrator was happy with the response and interest. Thank you again!

9.10.19 Animal Testing Clips

Associated Press: EPA to reduce use of animal testing in predicting hazards
The Environmental Protection Agency is trying to sharply cut its use of animals in testing for hazards. EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler said in a directive to senior staff Tuesday that "scientific advancements exist today" that permit the agency to better predict potential hazards to humans while reducing or avoiding animal testing.

Bloomberg Environment: EPA Seeks to End Agency's Animal Testing Efforts by 2035
Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Andrew Wheeler has signed a directive to reduce funding and requests for animal testing. The directive sets a target of reducing mammal study requests and funding 30% by 2025 and would eliminate all mammal study requests and funding by 2035.

CNN: EPA says it will eliminate animal testing by 2035
The Environmental Protection Agency announced a commitment to fully eliminate animal testing by 2035. "This is a longstanding personal belief on my behalf," EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler said Tuesday, recalling an op-ed he wrote for his college newspaper, The Observer, at Case Western Reserve University, in 1987, which the agency handed out to reporters.

E&E News: EPA plans to 'reduce, replace and refine' animal testing
EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler today announced plans to reduce animal testing and eliminate mammal testing by 2035. Wheeler said other methods, such as computer-based modeling and tests on cells in petri dishes, known as in vitro toxicology, are able to show the risks posed by chemicals and pesticides without the need for testing on lab animals.

The Hill: EPA takes major step toward ending animal testing
The Trump administration on Tuesday said it will adopt a plan to eliminate all animal testing requirements at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) by 2035. The agency announced it will devote $4.25 million for five universities to research and develop alternative methods of animal testing for evaluating chemical safety. EPA will begin winding down its funding of animal testing, aiming to cut use by 30 percent by 2025, and completely eliminate mammal testing 10 years later.

NPR: EPA Chief Pledges To Severely Cut Back On Animal Testing Of Chemicals
The Environmental Protection Agency says it will aggressively reduce the use of animals in toxicity testing, with a goal of eliminating all routine safety tests on mammals by 2035. Chemicals such as pesticides typically get tested for safety on animals like mice and rats. Researchers have long been trying to instead increase the use of alternative safety tests that rely on lab-grown cells or computer modeling. The EPA's administer, Andrew Wheeler, has now set some specific deadlines to try to speed up that transition.

Nature: Scientists concerned over US environment agency's plan to limit animal research
The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is trying to sharply reduce its use of animals in toxicity tests. Many scientists and environmentalists say the move is premature and could undermine chemical regulation. In a memo to staff, EPA administrator Andrew Wheeler said that the agency would make use of "cutting-edge, ethically sound science" that does not rely on animal testing.

Politico Pro: Wheeler directs EPA to phase out use of animal testing
EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler Tuesday directed his agency to phase out the use of animal research by 2035, a major win for the chemicals industry that will be freed from expensive and time-consuming testing, but that environmental advocates say could stymie the agency's ability to regulate dangerous chemicals.

Reuters: U.S. EPA chief to reduce agency-funded animal testing
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Andrew Wheeler said Tuesday he was signing a memo to reduce agency-funded animal testing, vowing to almost completely eliminate testing on mammals by 2035.

U.S. News & World Report: Trump's EPA Plans to Phase Out Chemical Testing on Animals
Protection Agency plans to phase out almost all studies using animals by 2035, a move that public health groups say will make it more difficult to regulate chemicals. "The memo will direct the agency to aggressively reduce animal testing," EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler said Tuesday in Washington, D.C. "This is an effort that the agency will undertake over the next 16 years to improve the science that we use for our scientific decisions" and eventually eliminate the use of animals in the agency's tests, he said.

Washington Examiner: EPA chief announces plan to eliminate reliance on animal research
Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Andrew Wheeler directed his department to phase out the use of animal research and allocated $4.25 million to advance research on alternative methods that can better predict potential hazards. In a memo signed on Tuesday, Wheeler outlined the EPA's plan to reduce requests for and funding of mammal studies by 30% by 2025, and to eliminate such requests and funding by 2035. Any mammal studies requested or funded after 2035 will require administrator approval on a case-by-case basis.

Washington Post: EPA chief directs agency to dramatically reduce animal testing
The Environmental Protection Agency announced Tuesday a plan to dramatically reduce its reliance on animal testing to assess the dangers of chemicals, pledging to end nearly all experiments on mammals by 2035. A directive from EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler says the agency will scale back requests for and funding of mammal studies by 30 percent by 2025; after 2035, any use of such tests will require the approval of the agency's administrator.

Associated Press
https://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2019/09/10/us/politics/ap-us-epa-animal-testing.html
EPA to reduce use of animal testing in predicting hazards
By Richard Lardner

The Environmental Protection Agency is trying to sharply cut its use of animals in testing for hazards.

EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler said in a directive to senior staff Tuesday that "scientific advancements exist today" that permit the agency to better predict potential hazards to humans while reducing or avoiding animal testing.

Wheeler said EPA will cut back on its request for spending on mammal studies by 30% by 2025 and eliminate all requests and funding for animal testing by 2035.

He's directing EPA's leadership team to form a working group of agency experts to come up with a plan within six months for accomplishing these goals.

Wheeler says the EPA also is steering $4.25 million to five universities to further research alternatives to animal testing.

Bloomberg Environment
https://news.bloombergenvironment.com/environment-and-energy/epa-seeks-to-end-agencys-animal-testing-efforts-by-2035
EPA Seeks to End Agency's Animal Testing Efforts by 2035
By Adam Allington

Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Andrew Wheeler has signed a directive to reduce funding and requests for animal testing.

The directive sets a target of reducing mammal study requests and funding 30% by 2025 and would eliminate all mammal study requests and funding by 2035.

"We are also awarding $4.25 million to advance the research and development of alternative test methods for evaluating the safety of chemicals that will minimize and hopefully eliminate the need for animal testing," Wheeler said.

Any mammal studies requested after 2035 will require administrator approval on a case-by-case basis. In accordance with the memo, the EPA also will hold an annual conference on "new approach methods" (NAMs), which typically reduce or eliminate animal tests, beginning in 2019.

Among the alternative testing methods that Wheeler mentioned were computer modeling programs and in vitro tests, based on human cells and tissues.

The agency's directive also applies to its office of chemical safety and pollution prevention and its research and development office.

Pesticide Testing

While the EPA doesn't conduct animal testing itself, pesticide companies seeking to register their products under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act are often required to conduct significant animal tests when they submit data to the agency.

"Because they are designed to have biological activity, internationally pesticides are tested heavily to ensure safety," said Anna Lowit, a senior science adviser in the EPA's Office of Pesticide Programs.

Lowit said most countries require the same kinds of tests, such as for acute lethality, cancer, effects on the developing organism during pregnancy, and effects on reproduction.

By comparison, in the drug sector, new products eventually move on to humans in clinical trials, "but in the pesticide arena we don't go to clinical trials so everything is done on animals," said Lowit. "More lab animals are used on pesticide testing than any other sector because of that reason."

Accurate Testing

Some consumer advocacy groups have questioned whether nonanimal testing methods are as accurate as mammal-based tests.

"Without non-human primate research, we lose our ability to learn better ways to prevent negative pregnancy outcomes, including miscarriage, stillbirth and premature birth," wrote Nancy Haigwood, a scientist and director of the Oregon National Primate Research Center.

In a 2016 white paper, Haigwood said primate research, mostly on monkeys, has been directly responsible for helping scientists uncover information to make human organ transplants easier and more accessible.

Other scientists have also pointed out that because in vitro and nonanimal procedures are generally used in combination with live animal testing, they complement animal research, rather than replace it.

Equivalent or Better

Speaking before reporters at a ceremonial signing of the new directive, Wheeler said scientific advancements make it possible for NAMs to produce the same, or better, data on the potential biological effects to humans.

"Sometimes the information that we learn from rats is not directly applicable to humans," he said.

Wheeler pointed out that not only will transitioning to computer-based testing save more animals, but it could also potentially allow scientists to evaluate more chemicals for broader range of biological effects more quickly.

"For decades, there has been a misguided reliance on cruel and scientifically flawed animal tests, and the EPA's decision marks the beginning of the end of them," said Amy Clippinger, director of PETA's regulatory testing department.

Going forward she said PETA's scientists will be collaborating with regulatory agencies and companies, "to help them switch to efficient and effective, nonanimal testing approaches and finally replace toxicity tests on all animals," she said.

CNN
https://www.cnn.com/2019/09/10/politics/epa-animal-testing/index.html?no-st=1568143628
EPA says it will eliminate animal testing by 2035
By Ali Zaslav

The Environmental Protection Agency announced a commitment to fully eliminate animal testing by 2035.

"This is a longstanding personal belief on my behalf," EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler said Tuesday, recalling an op-ed he wrote for his college newspaper, The Observer, at Case Western Reserve University, in 1987, which the agency handed out to reporters.

The EPA has relied on animal testing to evaluate the risks of chemicals and pesticides to human health but has taken steps in recent years to move toward new alternatives and technologies. The Toxic Substances Control Act that was amended in 2016 to reduce reliance on animal testing as well.

Animal rights groups, including the Humane Society and PETA, praised the move.

"PETA is celebrating the EPA's decision to protect animals certainly, but also humans and the environment, by switching from cruel and scientifically flawed animal tests in favor of modern, non-animal testing methods," said Dr. Amy Clippinger, director of PETA's regulatory testing department.

Wheeler said the agency will provide $4.25 million in grant funding to five universities, Johns Hopkins University, Vanderbilt University, Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Oregon State University and University of California Riverside, to research alternative test methods, like computer modeling and invitro testing.

However environmental groups slammed the EPA's directive, raising concerns about the adequacy of the alternative test methods for all chemicals, and arguing the move largely benefits chemical companies more than the public.

"EPA is eliminating tools that lay the groundwork for protecting the public from dangers like chlorpyrifos, formaldehyde and PFAS. Phasing out foundational scientific testing methods can make it much harder to identify toxic chemicals -- and protect human health," Jennifer Sass, senior scientist for the Healthy People and Thriving Communities program at the Natural Resources Defense Council, said in a statement.

E&E News
https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/2019/09/10/stories/1061111785
EPA plans to 'reduce, replace and refine' animal testing
By Ariana Figueroa

EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler today announced plans to reduce animal testing and eliminate mammal testing by 2035.

Wheeler said other methods, such as computer-based modeling and tests on cells in petri dishes, known as in vitro toxicology, are able to show the risks posed by chemicals and pesticides without the need for testing on lab animals.

"We are already making significant efforts to reduce, replace and refine our animal testing requirements under both statutory and strategic directives," Wheeler said in a prepared statement.

The effort wasn't unexpected; Wheeler said in his confirmation hearing that he planned to scale back animal testing.

"There are better alternatives for testing the chemical impacts on people than animal testing," he said.

Wheeler said using alternative methods decreases the need for animal testing, allows for a broader evaluation of chemicals in a shorter time frame and is cost effective.

EPA will reduce its budgetary funding request for animal studies by 30% by 2025, establish a senior leadership team to provide Wheeler with an alternative testing plan within six months and hold an annual conference on the agency's progress, among other steps.

Wheeler said the first conference will be held before the end of 2019.

Animal rights activists, who see the use of lab animals as cruel and unnecessary, are lauding the plan.
Sara Amundson, president of the Humane Society Legislative Fund, praised the agency for setting a clear deadline to phase out animal testing and said the alternative methods are effective for testing the toxicity of chemicals.

"This is the science that is being utilized right now and will be the science of the future that will truly protect public health and the environment," she said.

But researchers have expressed concern with the phaseout, arguing that many public health decisions are based on results from testing on rats, mice and other lab animals.

Alexis Temkin, a toxicologist at the Environmental Working Group, said that while alternative methods can help scientists screen a large amount of chemicals, animal models are needed to identify how those chemicals react with living organisms.

"In terms of fully understanding how that chemical is going to function in terms of biological systems, that's where animal models really have proven to be necessary," she said.

Penny Fenner-Crisp, a former EPA senior scientist, said she is concerned about alternative models replacing more complex studies that require animal models such as developmental studies, reproductive studies and general toxicity research.

Wheeler also announced the agency is awarding $4.24 million to five universities to improve the development of alternative testing methods for evaluating the health effects of chemicals. Those institutions are John Hopkins University, Vanderbilt University, Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Oregon State University and the University of California, Riverside.

The Hill
https://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/460674-epa-takes-major-step-toward-ending-animal-testing
EPA takes major step toward ending animal testing
By Miranda Green

The Trump administration on Tuesday said it will adopt a plan to eliminate all animal testing requirements at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) by 2035.

The agency announced it will devote $4.25 million for five universities to research and develop alternative methods of animal testing for evaluating chemical safety. EPA will begin winding down its funding of animal testing, aiming to cut use by 30 percent by 2025, and completely eliminate mammal testing 10 years later.

The agency announced it will devote $4.25 million for five universities to research and develop alternative methods of animal testing for evaluating chemical safety. EPA will begin winding down its funding of animal testing, aiming to cut use by 30 percent by 2025, and completely eliminate mammal testing 10 years later.

EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler on Tuesday directed the agency to implement new methods to test the effects of chemicals and other substances regulated by the department in order to "significantly reduce" the use of testing on animals. Cell testing and computer modeling are the main alternatives to animal testing.

"This is an effort that the agency will undertake over the next 16 years to improve the science we use for scientific decision and eliminate the need for animals tests. This is a longstanding personal belief on my behalf," Wheeler said at a press conference Tuesday.

"There are a lot of alternatives between computer modeling and in vitro testing. There are better alternatives for testing the chemical impacts on people than animal testing," he added.

According to official memorandum signed by Wheeler on Tuesday, the effort would potentially allow for the evaluation of "more chemicals across a broader range of potential biological effects, but in a shorter timeframe with fewer resources."

The agency argues the move away from animal testing could ultimately allow for "equal or greater biological predictivity than current animal models."

"Scientific advancements exist today that allow us to better predict potential hazards for risk assessment purposes without the use of traditional methods that rely on animal testing," Wheeler wrote in the memo.

The move was hailed by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) and the Humane Society, groups that partnered with EPA on the development of the plan. Each group has a long history advocating against testing products and chemicals on animals.

"We're excited to see the EPA ending its reliance on animal testing. Not only because it will reduce the suffering of animals, but it will better protect health and the environment," said Kristi Sullivan of Physicians' Committee for Responsible Medicine at the press hearing.

"This is the science that is being utilized right now and will be the science of the future that will truly protect public health and the environment," said Sara Amundson, president of the Humane Society Legislative Fund.

The Obama administration first took steps toward removing animal testing from the agency in June 2016 under an amendment to the Toxic Substances Control Act that requires the EPA to reduce a reliance on mammal testing.

Researchers though have criticized the decision. EPA's plans were first reported by The Intercept in July.

Scientists said eliminating mammal testing for chemicals could limit the amount of data known about the effects on humans. Cell testing and computer modeling they say, often only paints a small picture of the harmful effects substances could reap on the public.

Internal EPA emails obtained by the Intercept show that major chemical companies also supported the move away from animal testing. Wheeler is a former lobbyist for various chemical companies.

NPR
https://www.capeandislands.org/post/epa-chief-pledges-severely-cut-back-animal-testing-chemicals#stream/0
EPA Chief Pledges To Severely Cut Back On Animal Testing Of Chemicals
By Nell Greenfieldboyce

The Environmental Protection Agency says it will aggressively reduce the use of animals in toxicity testing, with a goal of eliminating all routine safety tests on mammals by 2035.

Chemicals such as pesticides typically get tested for safety on animals like mice and rats. Researchers have long been trying to instead increase the use of alternative safety tests that rely on lab-grown cells or computer modeling. The EPA's administer, Andrew Wheeler, has now set some specific deadlines to try to speed up that transition.

In a signed memo made public Tuesday, he's directed the agency to reduce all requests for, and funding of, studies with live mammals by 30 percent by 2025. He says he wants the agency to essentially eliminate all mammal study requests and funding by 2035, with the use of live mammals only allowed after that with special permission.

"I really do think that with the lead time that we have in this — 16 years before we completely eliminate animal testing — that we have enough time to come up with alternatives," says Wheeler.

He notes that he wrote an op-ed for his college newspaper on the need to reduce animal testing back in 1987.

"I didn't think we were that far away from banning animal testing then," Wheeler says. "Part of why I'm doing this today is because it's been 30 years and we haven't made enough progress."

"This has been a long-standing belief of mine on animal testing," he adds, saying his mother educated him early about the ethical implications of animal testing. "My older sister is a zoologist, my younger sister is a veterinarian, so I come from this family that cares deeply about animals and the protection of animals."

An environmental advocacy group, the Natural Resources Defense Council, has come out against the move.

"EPA is eliminating tools that lay the groundwork for protecting the public from dangers like chlorpyrifos, formaldehyde and PFAS," NRDC scientist Jennifer Sass says in a written statement. "Phasing out foundational scientific testing methods can make it much harder to identify toxic chemicals — and protect human health. Once again, the Trump administration appears to be working on behalf of the chemical industry and not the public. Congress should bar the agency from blindfolding itself."

Wheeler says chemical companies did not lobby him to do take this action. "This is a long-standing issue of interest to me, personally, and that's what brought this about," he says. "I've not talked to a single chemical company about this."

Wheeler signed the memo Monday at EPA headquarters, flanked by representatives from animal welfare groups such as the Humane Society of the United States and People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals.

"This is the only government agency who has made such a commitment with an aggressive timeline," says Kathleen Conlee, vice president of animal research issues for the Humane Society. "We'd love to see other agencies embrace this approach of making timelines with goals."

Penelope Fenner-Crisp, a former senior official at the EPA, says the toxicology community has been working hard for years to reduce, refine, and replace the use of animals in testing.

But, she says, "I'm always a little troubled with deadlines on efforts like this. You want to have replacements that are as good as or better than the ones that have been used with whole animals. And you can't always dictate the timeline for accomplishing that."

Fenner-Crisp says there's currently no substitute for some of the more complex and sophisticated toxicities, such as the effect of chemicals on animals' reproductive systems.

The EPA announced that it will hold an annual conference on the development of new methods and has awarded $4.5 million to five universities to help develop them.

"I think it's a big day for the field of alternatives to animal testing," says Dr. Thomas Hartung, director of the Center for Alternatives to Animal Testing at Johns Hopkins University, which got a grant to develop a new toxicity model for the brain.

Officials have long mostly given lip service to the idea of finding substitutes, he says.

"I think this is really taking action. I was very surprised. I did not expect such a strong position," says Hartung, who notes that most of the animal tests used by the EPA and other agencies are half-a century old.

"Nothing has really changed. We have seen very few new methodologies being actually applied."

Nature
https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-019-02715-0

Scientists concerned over US environment agency's plan to limit animal research

By Jeff Tollefson

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is trying to sharply reduce its use of animals in toxicity tests. Many scientists and environmentalists say the move is premature and could undermine chemical regulation.

In a memo to staff, EPA administrator Andrew Wheeler said that the agency would make use of "cutting-edge, ethically sound science" that does not rely on animal testing.

Wheeler signed a directive on 10 September that commits the EPA to reduce its funding request for animal studies 30% by 2025, and phase them out entirely by 2035. After 2035, any tests or funds for studies involving animals such as mice would require the approval of the EPA administrator. The plan, which will affect research by EPA scientists and industry, has been in the works for more than a year. Agency officials have said that the shift away from animal experiments won't limit chemical regulation or reduce public safety.

Wheeler also said that EPA had awarded US$4.25 million in grants to universities for research into alternative toxicity testing methods. The grant recipients are Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland; Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee; Oregon State University in Corvallis and the University of California, Riverside.

"I don't think anyone would be saddened by reducing animal research," says Laura Vandenberg, an environmental health scientist at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. But she fears that the EPA is effectively tying its own hands.

Uncertain outcomes

Scientists can and do use advanced screening tools to study the potential impacts of chemicals at the cellular and biochemical level, Vandenberg says. But in order to regulate a chemical the agency must show that there are adverse effects in living organisms, she says. "There is no adverse effect in a Petri dish."

And just because researchers don't see negative effects of chemicals on cells in the lab don't mean they aren't there, Vandenberg adds. "We are going to get caught in a position where we won't really be able to regulate chemicals in the US."

The Humane Society, an animal-advocacy group in Gaithersburg, Maryland, praised the EPA's decision. "We applaud the agency and urge industry and other stakeholders to continue this momentum and move away from animal testing," said chief executive officer Kitty Block in a statement.

Not every is so sanguine about EPA's decision. The move represents an "unholy alliance" between the chemical industry and animal rights groups that are pushing to halt animal tests, says Jennifer Sass, a senior scientist at the Natural Resources Defense Council, an advocacy group in New York City.

Sass says that the EPA has reduced its reliance on animal testing in certain areas. For instance, tests to see whether a chemical is corrosive to the skin can now be done on skin that is grown in a Petri dish. But without tests on animals such as mice or rabbits, the only way for companies to study chemical interactions in the body is to use computer models, Sass says. And those models are often proprietary, which makes it hard to assess their accuracy.

"A chemical goes into a black box, and out comes an answer that is very hard for people to understand and independently review," Sass says.

Politico Pro
https://subscriber.politicopro.com/article/2019/09/wheeler-directs-epa-to-phase-out-use-of-animal-testing-1719380

Wheeler directs EPA to phase out use of animal testing
By Annie Snider

EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler Tuesday directed his agency to phase out the use of animal research by 2035, a major win for the chemicals industry that will be freed from expensive and time-consuming testing, but that environmental advocates say could stymie the agency's ability to regulate dangerous chemicals.

Wheeler was joined at a signing ceremony at EPA headquarters by an unlikely set of allies that included representatives from PETA and the Humane Society. The memo signed by Wheeler orders EPA's research and chemical safety offices to reduce their requests for and funding of mammal studies by 30 percent by 2025 and to eliminate them altogether in the following decade, except in specific cases approved by the Administrator.

Notably, the memo also directs EPA to "come as close as possible" to excluding animal tests, even those conducted by outside scientists, from its approval processes by 2035.

"Scientific advancements exist today that allow us to better predict potential hazards for risk assessment purposes without the use of traditional methods that rely on animal testing," Wheeler's memo said.

Wheeler also directed the offices to hold an annual conference on alternative testing methods and announced $4.25 million in funding for five universities to develop new methods.

EPA has already been moving to reduce animal testing since Congress called for it in its 2016 overhaul of the Toxic Substances Control Act. The Trump administration included the goal in its strategic plan for EPA.

Tuesday's policy move was welcomed by Republican lawmakers and animal welfare groups.

"PETA is celebrating the EPA's decision to protect animals certainly — but also humans and the environment — by switching from cruel and scientifically flawed animal tests in favor of modern, non-animal testing methods," PETA's Amy Clippinger said in a statement.

But independent researchers argue that animal testing is a crucial part of the process for identifying chemicals that pose hazards to humans, and that alternative methods, like using computer models and cells in a petri dish, cannot capture the full range of effects that chemicals cause in complex biological systems.

Regulators rely on three major types of research to assess the harms of chemicals: animal studies, computer models, and human data. A separate Trump administration effort to require EPA only on studies that have publicly-available data stands to exclude many of the studies with human data, since those often include confidential personal information.

Environmental advocates fear that eliminating animal testing will force EPA to ignore important information about harms that chemicals cause in people and animals.

"These [alternative] methods can miss chemicals that can become more toxic in a whole animal, like a human, and may not be predictive of sensitive times in human growth and development (e.g., between conception and early adulthood)," NRDC Senior Scientist Jennifer Sass said in an email.

Wheeler pushed back on the idea that the move was prompted by lobbying from the chemicals industry, which has long supported the phaseout of animal research, saying that he has not discussed the policy with anyone from industry.

Instead, Wheeler argued that the issue has been a personal priority for him for decades, pointing reporters to a 1987 opinion piece he wrote in his college newspaper arguing for reduced animal testing.

Reuters
https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-animaltesting-epa-idUSKCN1VV1TT
U.S. EPA chief to reduce agency-funded animal testing
By David Shepardson

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Andrew Wheeler said Tuesday he was signing a memo to reduce agency-funded animal testing, vowing to almost completely end the practice by 2035.

Wheeler also said he was awarding $4.25 million to five research universities to advance research and development of alternative test methods for evaluating safety of chemicals “that will minimize, and hopefully eliminate, the need for animal testing.” The plan calls on cutting mammal testing by 30% by 2025.

A handful of U.S. agencies conduct animal testing, including the Federal Drug Administration for vaccines and drugs, and Agriculture Department for pesticides. The Transportation Department and National Toxicology Program also conduct such tests.

The news was welcomed by animal rights advocates like PETA and the Humane Society, which had urged agencies to shift to non-animal testing.

“PETA is celebrating the EPA’s decision to protect animals certainly - but also humans and the environment - by switching from cruel and scientifically flawed animal tests in favor of modern, non animal testing methods,” said Amy Clippinger, director of PETA’s regulatory testing program.

But some environmental groups said animal testing was necessary for identifying toxic chemicals and ensuring they do not harm the public.

“EPA is eliminating tools that lay the groundwork for protecting the public from dangers like chlorpyrifos, formaldehyde and PFAS,” said Jennifer Sass, a senior scientists at the Natural Resources Defense Council.

U.S. News & World Report
https://www.usnews.com/news/national-news/articles/2019-09-10/trumps-epa-plans-to-phase-out-chemical-testing-on-animals

Trump’s EPA Plans to Phase Out Chemical Testing on Animals
By Cecelia Smith-Schoenwalder

Protection Agency plans to phase out almost all studies using animals by 2035, a move that public health groups say will make it more difficult to regulate chemicals.

"The memo will direct the agency to aggressively reduce animal testing," EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler said Tuesday in Washington, D.C.

"This is an effort that the agency will undertake over the next 16 years to improve the science that we use for our scientific decisions" and eventually eliminate the use of animals in the agency's tests, he said.
After 2035, any requests for using mammals like mice, rats, guinea pigs and rabbits in studies will require approval from the EPA administrator on a case-by-case basis.

Under the directive Wheeler signed Tuesday, the agency plans to reduce requests for and funding of mammal studies by 30% by 2025.

While these dates extend past Wheeler's tenure at EPA, he said he expects the agency's career staff to continue working toward the goal.

He said the move away from animal testing is a "longstanding personal belief," which he credited to his family, including his sisters, one of whom is a zoologist and the other a veterinarian.

EPA passed out to press a commentary Wheeler wrote as a college student in a 1987 edition of "The Observer," the student newspaper of Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio.

"While some animal research is necessary, much of it is needless or can be accomplished using alternatives," Wheeler wrote. The research that requires animal testing, he wrote, includes studies that examine cures for human illnesses and injuries.

Animal rights groups cheered the directive.

"PETA is celebrating the EPA's decision to protect animals certianly – but also humans and the environment – by switching from cruel and scientifically flawed animals test in favor of modern, non-animal testing methods," Amy Clippinger, director of the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals' regulatory testing department, said in a statement.

Public health groups, on the other hand, said that testing on animals provides critical information on how chemicals could affect humans.

"EPA is eliminating tools that lay the groundwork for protecting the public from dangers like chlorpyrifos, formaldehyde and PFAS," Jennifer Sass, a senior scientist at the Natural Resources Defense Council, said in a

statement. "Phasing out foundational scientific testing methods can make it much harder to identify toxic chemicals – and protect human health."

When asked about criticisms from the groups, Wheeler said: "They have 16 years to get on board, and I hope they do."

Washington Examiner
https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/epa-chief-announces-plan-to-eliminate-reliance-on-animal-research

EPA chief announces plan to eliminate reliance on animal research

By Carlin Becker

Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Andrew Wheeler directed his department to phase out the use of animal research and allocated $4.25 million to advance research on alternative methods that can better predict potential hazards.

In a memo signed on Tuesday, Wheeler outlined the EPA's plan to reduce requests for and funding of mammal studies by 30% by 2025, and to eliminate such requests and funding by 2035. Any mammal studies requested or funded after 2035 will require administrator approval on a case-by-case basis.

The EPA will work to replace animal research with new approach methods (NAMs) that are found to be "equivalent or better than the animal tests replaced" and will "remain fully protective of human health and the environment." The department will also award $4.25 million to five universities to research alternative test methods and strategies.

"This is an effort that the agency will undertake over the next 16 years to improve the science we use for scientific decision and eliminate the need for animals tests," Wheeler said at a press conference. "This is a longstanding personal belief on my behalf."

The move was welcomed by several lawmakers and animal welfare groups who have opposed the department's history of subjecting rodents, rabbits, and other mammals to taxpayer-funded experiments, which have involved force feeding them lard and coconut oil, forcing them to breathe diesel exhaust, ozone and smog, as well as electrocuting them before ultimately euthanizing them.

"Animal testing is often cruel and painful, with limited applicability to human health outcomes. Non-animal research is more accurate, more cost effective, and more humane," Florida Rep. Matt Gaetz said. "I commend the EPA for their decision, and hope other departments and agencies will follow suit."

"I thank the EPA for recognizing that we can protect animals and taxpayers by curbing the use of animals in research where scientifically-proven alternatives are readily available," Rep. Ken Calvert of California added.

Justin Goodman, vice president of Advocacy and Public Policy at taxpayer watchdog White Coat Waste Project, additionally applauded the initiative as the "most comprehensive and aggressive plan in U.S. history" to cut waste and curb the use of and reliance on animal research.

Wheeler's announcement builds upon progress the department has been making under the Trump administration to reduce its reliance on animal experiments, which has saved over 200,000 laboratory animals in recent years.

As the EPA moves to eliminate such research, several other federal agencies have also moved towards phasing out their own animal experiments, including the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Veterans Affairs, the National Institutes of Health, and the Food and Drug Administration.

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https://www.washingtonpost.com/science/2019/09/10/epa-chief-directs-agency-dramatically-reduce-reliance-animal-testing/

EPA chief directs agency to dramatically reduce animal testing

By Karin Brulliard

The Environmental Protection Agency announced Tuesday a plan to dramatically reduce its reliance on animal testing to assess the dangers of chemicals, pledging to end nearly all experiments on mammals by 2035.

A directive from EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler says the agency will scale back requests for and funding of mammal studies by 30 percent by 2025; after 2035, any use of such tests will require the approval of the agency's administrator. The memo also commits $4.25 million in grants to five universities for developing alternative experiments that "will minimize and hopefully eliminate the need for animal testing," Wheeler told reporters.

Wheeler signed the directive while flanked by representatives of animal protection groups that have long campaigned against animal testing. Public health and environmental groups, however, expressed concern about the change.

Wheeler, a former coal lobbyist who has championed the Trump administration's rollback of environmental regulations, described the subject as one of personal importance to him. Wheeler's staff gave reporters copies of a 1987 column he had written for his college newspaper that called for decreasing animal testing.

"There are a lot of alternatives between computer modeling to in vitro testing that we can use to replace animal testing," Wheeler said Tuesday. "Oftentimes we find that the animal testing … has perhaps misled us on the science, and there are better alternatives for testing the impacts of chemicals on people."

The EPA's move comes as Congress is increasing its scrutiny of federal agencies over animal tests.

In April, the Agriculture Department ended controversial experiments on cats. in 2018, the Food and Drug Administration halted a nicotine study on squirrel monkeys and Congress passed legislation prohibiting most uses of dogs in medical research at the Department of Veterans Affairs. VA has since reduced but declined to eliminate the tests, and the agency's inspector general is now investigating the experiments at the urging of lawmakers.

The EPA performs tests on animals and in some cases requires such tests from chemical companies. Agency labs use as many as 20,000 rabbits, mice, fish and rats each year, according to Justin Goodman, vice president of advocacy and public policy for the White Coat Waste Project, a three-year-old organization that has helped galvanize bipartisan opposition to federally funded animal testing.

The EPA's new plan amounts to "what we believe is the most comprehensive and aggressive plan in U.S. history to cut wasteful taxpayer-funded animal testing," Goodman told reporters Tuesday.

Wheeler described the directive as a continuation of efforts that accelerated in 2016, under the Obama administration, when the Toxic Substances Control Act was amended to require the EPA to reduce its reliance on animal testing.

While such developments have been praised by animal advocates, they have been assailed by some researchers and public health and environmental groups that say animal tests remain critical for determining risks to people.

The Natural Resources Defense Council called Wheeler's directive an "irresponsible plan" that will depend on testing methods that "may not be sufficient for testing all chemicals."

"Phasing out foundational scientific testing methods can make it much harder to identify toxic chemicals — and protect human health," Jennifer Sass, senior scientist for the council's Healthy People and Thriving Communities program, said in a statement. "Once again, the Trump administration appears to be working on behalf of the chemical industry and not the public. Congress should bar the agency from blindfolding itself."

Internal EPA communications obtained earlier this year by the Intercept, a news website, show that the agency communicated with chemical companies including Dow Chemical about collaborating on alternative testing methods.

Wheeler said Tuesday that he had "not been lobbied by a single chemical company" on the topic, which he said was "of long-standing interest to me personally." When he was young, he said, his mother told him about "the ethical problems" of animal testing, and he added that one of his sisters is a zoologist and another a veterinarian.

Wheeler said he felt confident that the 16 years between now and 2035 would provide enough time for scientists to develop effective non-animal tests.

"When I wrote this article back in 1987, I didn't think we were that far away from banning animal testing," Wheeler said. "Part of why I'm doing this today is it's been 30 years, and we haven't made enough progress."

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