Identifying and Regulating Carcinogens

November 1987

NTIS order #PB88-136999
Foreword

Congressional interest in reducing and preventing exposures to carcinogenic chemicals has been expressed in statutes authorizing the regulation of food additives, drugs, consumer products, occupational exposures, air and water pollutants, drinking water contaminants, pesticides, toxic chemicals, and hazardous wastes. OTA’s previous work on these topics includes our 1981 report, Technologies for Determining Cancer Risks From the Environment, as well as other OTA reports describing technologies for controlling environmental and occupational hazards.

This background paper was requested by the House Government Operations Committee and its Subcommittee on Intergovernmental Relations and Human Resources. In it, OTA describes policies issued by Federal agencies concerning the identification, assessment, and regulation of carcinogenic chemicals; the chemicals that have been regulated because of carcinogenic risk; the Federal Government’s carcinogenicity testing program; and the results of OTA’s analysis of the extent of agency action on chemicals determined to be carcinogenic.

This background paper covers 16 different Federal agencies, programs, and activities: the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, the Mine Safety and Health Administration, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, the Consumer Product Safety Commission, and the Food and Drug Administration, including its activities on food and color additives, human drugs, and animal drugs. For the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), this background paper discusses the Carcinogen Assessment Group, as well as EPA standard-setting on carcinogens under the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Safe Drinking Water Act, Toxic Substances Control Act, the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act, Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, and the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act. Finally, the activity of the National Toxicology Program is described.

A large number of Federal agency personnel and others assisted in providing information for this background paper. We thank them for their assistance. Key OTA staff involved with this background paper were Karl Kronebusch, Sylvia Tognetti, and Neil Holtzman. Carl Cranor worked on this background paper while serving as a Congressional Fellow of the American Philosophical Association.

John H. Gibbons
Director
OTA Project Staff for Identifying and Regulating Carcinogens

Roger C. Herdman, Assistant Director, OTA
Division of Health & Life Sciences

Clyde J. Behney, Health Program Manager

Karl Kronebusch, Study Director

Hellen Gelband, Director, Special Projects Office

Sylvia Tognetti, Research Assistant
Neil Holtzman, Senior Analyst
Carl Cranor, Fellow
Brigitte M. Duffy, Research Assistant

Virginia Cwalina, Administrative Assistant
Carol Ann Guntow, PC Specialist
Karen T. Davis, Secretary/Word Processor Specialist
Carolyn Martin, Clerical Assistant

*Since August 1987.*