

April 2013

Dear Dr. Birnbaum,

The member agencies of the Interagency Coordinating Committee on the Validation of Alternative Methods (ICCVAM) have reviewed your letter published in the in the February issue of *Environmental Health Perspectives* (vol 121, issue 2). We are pleased to see the new philosophy toward ICCVAM described in your letter. We are looking forward to working with NICEATM to forge the new direction you described in your editorial for ICCVAM. We believe in working together to align ICCVAM to aid the agencies in implementing the vision laid out by the National Academy of Sciences in the 2007 NRC report on Toxicity Testing in the 21st Century. Although this change in strategic direction of ICCVAM will take time, in the short-term we expect that some changes to the submission process can improve efficiency of the process and relevance to the agencies.

Finally, we would like to thank Dr. William Stokes for his many years of dedicated federal service. Dr. Stokes' leadership has been instrumental in implementing the 3Rs: reduction, refinement, and replacement of animal testing with alternative approaches.

We look forward to working with NICEATM and the public as ICCVAM moves towards the future.