



OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF
DEFENSE RESEARCH AND ENGINEERING

3040 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-3040

December 8, 2010



Rear Admiral William S. Stokes
Director, National Toxicology Program Interagency
Center for the Evaluation of Alternative Toxicological Methods
National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences
P.O. Box 12233
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709

Dear Rear Admiral Stokes:

I am replying to Dr. Linda Birnbaum's letter dated September 2, 2010, requesting the Department of Defense's review of the suitability of four types of alternative testing methods and strategies to further reduce and refine the use of animals for assessing the ocular hazard potential of chemicals and products. The Department agrees with the recommendations by the Interagency Coordinating Committee on the Validation of Alternative Methods (ICCVAM) that the recommended pain management strategies and the Cytosensor Microphysiometer test method are scientifically valid and can be appropriate to reduce and refine the use of animals (as described in NIH Publications No. 10-7514, 10-7513, and 10-7553). The Department also agrees with the ICCVAM recommendation that the other test methods studied by ICCVAM regarding assessing ocular hazard potential do not meet performance standards needed to be suitable for regulatory safety testing (as described in NIH Publications No. 107513, 10-7553, and 10-7515).

The Department will use a variety of mechanisms to educate and encourage the use of these revised methods for Department-sponsored research. Informing Department scientists and veterinarians will be accomplished through activities such as newsletters and training sessions for both Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) members and laboratory personnel. Extramural scientists supporting Department research will be informed of these alternative test methods through their interactions with Department personnel and IACUCs. The Department takes seriously the responsibility to develop and encourage methods that replace, reduce, and refine the use of animals in research.

Sincerely,

/s/

David A. Honey, Ph.D.
Director, Research Directorate