

Recd. 2/28/08



Department of Energy
Office of Science
Washington, DC 20585

FEB 20 2008

Rear Admiral William S. Stokes
Executive Director
Interagency Coordinating Committee on the Validation of Alternative Methods
National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences
P.O. Box 12233, Mail Code EC-17
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709

Dear Admiral Stokes:

This letter is in response to a request from Dr. Samuel H. Wilson, Acting Director, National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, in a letter dated October 25, 2007. Dr. Wilson requested the Department of Energy's (DOE) review of the test method recommendations for four *in vitro* test methods proposed for identifying substances that may cause ocular corrosion or severe ocular irritation. These recommendations are contained in a multi-volume document entitled: *The Interagency Coordinating Committee on the Validation of Alternative Methods (ICCVAM) Test Method Evaluation Report: In Vitro Test Methods for Identifying Ocular Corrosives and Severe Irritants* (NIH Publication No. 07-4517). The test methods reviewed are the: (1) Bovine Corneal Opacity and Permeability (BCOP) assay, (2) the Isolated Chicken Eye (ICE) assay, (3) the Isolated Rabbit Eye (IRE) assay, and (4) the Hen's Egg Test – Chorioallantoic Membrane (HET-CAM) assay.

These documents were reviewed by our staff in the Office of Science. Based on this review, DOE finds that the recommendations are consistent with the ICCVAM efforts to identify test protocols that "more accurately assess the safety and hazards of chemicals and products and that refine, reduce, or replace animal use." The Background Review Documents (BRDs) and the Evaluation Report were developed in a thorough, open and technically defensible manner. The findings are well documented and supported by the underlying science.

As noted in the document, DOE is not one of the federal agencies that promulgates regulations or guidelines regarding the testing of potential ocular irritants or corrosives and thus does not have relevant test methods for which the ICCVAM test recommendations may be added or substituted.

Thank you for the opportunity to review these documents and please accept our appreciation for the time, effort, and expertise that were taken to develop these recommendations and their supporting background review documents.

Sincerely,

/s/

Jerry Elwood, Ph.D.
Acting Associate Director of Science
for Biological and Environmental Research