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Recent EPA Federal Register Notice

From November 2013 through April 25, 2014, the Environmental Protection Agency received approximately 75 public comments on the agency's proposed "Draft Guidelines for Product Environment Performance Standards and Ecolabels for Voluntary Use in Federal Procurement." These guidelines would assist federal purchasers in acquiring greener products and ultimately reaching their sustainability goals by providing criteria federal purchasers should consider in regards to private sector standards and ecolabels. On March 19, 2015, EPA issued a Federal Register Notice (FRN) indicating their support of the guidelines and announcing further public comment is required.

EPA wishes to construct a multi-stakeholder panel of individuals who will refine the draft guidelines for specific sectors. Public comment on the criteria requirements of the panel members will be held until April 20, 2015. In addition, EPA seeks public comment on the Information Collection Request (ICR) document the agency will submit to the Office of Management and Budget. The third aspect of the proposed draft guidelines involves the EPA's request of additional public recommendations in terms of ecolabel programs and standard development organizations. The EPA would like individuals from either related profession to submit specific standards and ecolabels that should be assessed in each proposed product category; furniture, building flooring, and building paints/coaters/removers, of the pilot program. The standards and ecolabel suggestions, in addition to public comment on the ICR, is due by May 18, 2015. For more information on these proposed draft guidelines or redirection to the public comment docket, follow: <http://www.epa.gov/epp/draftGuidelines>

EPA to Use TSCA Authority

The EPA studies chemical substances that enter the marketplace as nanomaterials to ensure that they are safe. However, EPA usually conducts these studies before the nanomaterials are allowed to enter the market. Conversely, on March 25, 2015, EPA announced that they will collect existing exposure, health, and safety information on chemicals that are present in the marketplace, but were manufactured as nanoscale materials. Companies that manufacture such materials will be required to complete a report to EPA which includes information regarding health and safety data, production volume, manufacture methods, and other specific information such as chemical identity of the nanomaterial. EPA wishes to use this information in order to determine if further action under the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) would be required. Section 8(a) of the TSCA supports EPA authority to require additional information regarding chemical substances and nanomaterials. In addition, a public comment period will be held and EPA expects the period to be 60 days in length. For more information regarding this EPA proposal, please visit: <http://www.epa.gov/oppt/nano/>

EPA Releases Environmental Justice 2020 Action Agenda Framework for Public Review and Comment

The EPA recently released the draft framework of their EJ 2020 Action Agenda for public review and comment. The EJ 2020 plan builds on EJ 2014 as it proposes to continue to improve economically distressed and environmentally oppressed regions. The document will be publicly available for review and comment beginning April 15, 2015. The public comment period will conclude June 15, 2015. During this 60 day period, EPA will hold dialogue sessions and public hearings regarding EJ 2020. Until the document is publicly provided, questions regarding EJ 2020 can be directed to Mark Rupp (rupp.mark@epa.gov) or Charles Lee, (lee.charles@epa.gov)



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