

**Division on Earth and Life Studies
Board on Environmental Studies and Toxicology**

March 6, 2023

Ms. Sahar Osman-Sypher
Senior Director
Chemical Products & Technology Division
American Chemistry Council

Dear Ms. Osman-Sypher:

Thank you for your interest in the National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) review of EPA's 2022 Formaldehyde IRIS Assessment. In this letter, we are pleased to provide clarifications regarding the information gathering sessions conducted by the *Committee to Review EPA's 2022 Draft Formaldehyde Assessment*.

Bearing in mind that the safety of our volunteers and staff remains paramount, and in order to maintain inclusivity, all open sessions conducted during in-person meetings of the committee have included a hybrid option for participants from the committee and sponsor to join virtually. All speakers besides the committee and sponsor, including any organized at the committee's request, have been invited to participate virtually. The committee has found all of the virtual contributions to be valuable to their deliberative process.

The open session on January 30, 2023, was organized to provide an opportunity for the committee to engage in a question-and-answer session with EPA. In addition to requesting answers in writing from EPA to their questions, the committee had requested this opportunity with the view that EPA would be best placed to provide any additional clarifications on the answers they had prepared for the committee. The question-and-answer session with EPA was open to the public and the committee questions and EPA's written answers were made publicly available via the project website. The session also included an opportunity for public comment, as have all other open sessions of the committee. During the session, members of the public were also encouraged to submit written comments or other materials relevant to the committee's charge at any time during the course of the study. After the session, EPA provided

written clarifications to their responses which were also made available via the project website and are included in the public access file.

The committee's charge is to review the assessment prepared by EPA, and not to conduct their own assessment of formaldehyde. The committee is also not charged to comment on other interpretations of scientific information relevant to the hazards and risks of formaldehyde, nor does the statement of task call on the committee to review alternative opinions of EPA's formaldehyde assessment. Any other topics that do not fall within the committee's charge are not within the purview of the committee's review.

With these points in mind, the open sessions conducted thus far reflect the committee's view that the sponsor, EPA, is best positioned to provide clarifications and answer questions on the assessment of formaldehyde that the committee's statement of task calls on them to review. In addition, the committee also solicited comments from the chair of the most recent NASEM *ad hoc* committee that provided consensus advice to EPA's IRIS program, *i.e.*, the *Committee to Review EPA's IRIS Assessment Handbook*. Moreover, the committee is also open to hear from any members of the public on topics relevant to their charge and public comment has been encouraged at every information gathering session. So that a diversity of views may be heard, comments have been solicited from one speaker per organization, with preference at each session given to those individuals and organizations who have not previously addressed the committee. Speakers were requested to limit comments to those relevant to the committee's task and to observe a time limit for verbal comments of 3 minutes, to allow a maximum number of speakers at each session. Thus far, 3 of the 7 hours of information gathering sessions have been devoted to public comment and more than 40 members of the public have elected to speak. The committee also draws upon written materials submitted to them to address the statement of task. All written materials shared with the committee and are maintained in a public access file.

Once again, we greatly appreciate your interest in the committee's work. We will be happy to keep you informed, via the project website, of any future information gathering sessions of the committee. We will also continue to maintain the opportunity for members of the public to provide written comments relevant to the committee's charge.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Z. Guyton

Kathryn Z. Guyton
Senior Program Officer, NASEM/BEST

cc: Jonathan Samet (Committee Chair), Gregory Symmes (NASEM), Audrey Mosley (NASEM), Elizabeth Eide (NASEM), Clifford Duke (BEST), formaldehyde@nas.edu