

Report outlines nano regulatory blueprint for next administration

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Former EPA official J. Clarence Davies released a report last week entitled "Nanotechnology Oversight: An Agenda for the Next Administration." Oversight is essential, according to Davies, in order to "ensure that the benefits of nanotechnology are maximized and the risks are identified and controlled."

The report has more than 35 recommendations for the next White House administration, which Davies divides into short and long-term agendas.

Among the recommendations, Davies' report encourages the next administration to "maximize the use of existing laws," such as TSCA and the Federal Food Drug and Cosmetic Act (FFDCA). Defining all nanomaterials as new substances under both statutes would, according to the report, enable EPA and the Food and Drug Administration to "consider the novel qualities and effects of nanomaterials." Short-term recommendations include:

- Increasing funding of environment, health and safety (EHS) research, requiring a peer reviewed EHS research plan, strengthening of the National Nanotechnology Initiative (NNI), separation of the NNI's promotional and oversight functions and establishment of a Nanotechnology Effects Institute;
- Regulatory coordination among all federal agencies;
- Increasing budgets and staffing for regulatory agencies;
- Increasing federal agency actions to promote the collection of information on nanotechnology within EPA, FDA and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and encouraging regulatory rulemaking targeted at nanomaterials;
- Promoting voluntary efforts to analyze nanotechnology risks; and
- Public involvement, including dissemination of nanotechnology information, and promoting stakeholder dialogue.

The report's long-term agenda suggests amendments to both TSCA and the FFDCA to improve their ability to adequately address nanomaterials in cosmetics, food packaging and dietary supplements, as well as utilization of OSHA to regulate worker exposure to nanoparticles.

The report also recommends improvement to the government's forecasting abilities and the creation of a commission to study the oversight of new or emerging technologies. The report says "nanotechnology comes in a treasure chest of riches and a Pandora's box of evils" and concludes that the "challenge of the new century and to the new administration is to use the treasure while keeping shut the lid on the Pandora's box."
— *Shawna Bligh*

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