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International
Center
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News Release

Release No. 12-09
January 29, 2009

World's First National Nanotech Requirement Expected

Canadian officials plan to require quantity, usage and chemical data

Washington, DC – Canada is reportedly planning in February to become the first nation in the world to require companies to detail their use of engineered nanomaterials. The information gathered under the requirement will be used to evaluate the risks of engineered nanomaterials and will help to develop appropriate safety measures to protect human health and the environment.

The one-time request will gather information that will be used towards the development of a regulatory framework and will target companies and institutions that manufactured or imported a total quantity greater than 1kg of a nanomaterial during the 2008 calendar year, according to a spokesperson for Environment Canada. The upcoming requirement is not a regulation or rule that will require users to submit information on a continual basis.

Project on Emerging Nanotechnologies (PEN) experts have been urging increased oversight of nanotechnologies in recent years, and note the move by the Canadian government is a significant step for consumer and environmental protection.

“Nanotechnology is developing rapidly. People and the environment are being increasingly exposed to new nanomaterials. Yet governments lack information on the type, quantity and possible risks of nanoscale materials being manufactured and used in products today. This is information that is vital to ensuring the safe use of nanotechnology,” according to Andrew Maynard, chief science advisor for PEN. “This decision by Canada—to establish the world’s first national mandatory nanoscale materials reporting requirement for companies—is an important step toward ensuring that nanotechnology regulation is driven by accurate information and high-quality science.”

Canada’s action comes shortly after the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued an interim report on its Nanoscale Materials Stewardship Program, a voluntary information submission program that has received limited industry participation. The EPA report notes the lack of data the program garnered and says the agency will consider how best to use the federal Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) to gather more risk data. Previous studies by PEN experts have concluded that TSCA is “extremely

deficient,” and that EPA has not effectively used the tools it has under that law to address nanotechnology, keeping the agency from identifying which substances are nanomaterials and whether they pose a hazard.

PEN reports *EPA and Nanotechnology: Oversight for the 21st Century* and *Nanotechnology Oversight: An Agenda for the New Administration* highlight specific actions that can be taken under TSCA to obtain crucial information on nanotechnology’s risks. Both reports are available online at: www.nanotechproject.org

About Nanotechnology

Nanotechnology is the ability to measure, see, manipulate and manufacture things usually between 1 and 100 nanometers. A nanometer is one billionth of a meter; a human hair is roughly 100,000 nanometers wide. In 2007, the global market for goods incorporating nanotechnology totaled \$147 billion. Lux Research projects that figure will grow to \$3.1 trillion by 2015.

The **Project on Emerging Nanotechnologies** is an initiative launched by the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and The Pew Charitable Trusts in 2005. It is dedicated to helping business, government and the public anticipate and manage possible health and environmental implications of nanotechnology. For more information about the project, log on to www.nanotechproject.org.

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