

(202) 564-3204, or send electronic mail inquiries to [mills.amy@epa.gov](mailto:mills.amy@epa.gov).

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### Background

IRIS is an EPA data base containing Agency consensus scientific positions on potential adverse human health effects that may result from chronic (or lifetime) exposure to chemical substances found in the environment. IRIS currently provides health effects information on over 500 specific chemical substances. A companion **Federal Register** notice today provides additional background on the IRIS program and data base, and requests public comment on which substances to add or update.

EPA has provided outreach to facilitate the use and understanding of the data base. These efforts include a telephone hotline (513-569-7254) which provides answers to public inquiries about access to IRIS, the content of specific IRIS health assessments, and risk assessment methodologies. EPA also operates a reading room (located in EPA's Andrew W. Breidenbach Environmental Research Center, 26 West Martin Luther King Dr., Cincinnati, OH) where the public may, by appointment, view background files supporting IRIS assessments. Further, EPA provides IRIS on the Internet for public access at [www.epa.gov/iris](http://www.epa.gov/iris).

##### Today's Actions

(1) EPA is moving the hotline function and reading room to the Washington, DC area. The hotline will be accessed via a new phone number, fax number, and email address. This information will be shown on the IRIS web site ([www.epa.gov/iris](http://www.epa.gov/iris)) no later than September 30, 2001. The address of the new reading room will be provided concurrently on the IRIS web site.

(2) In response to user requests, EPA has undertaken a redesign of the IRIS web site. This change does not involve a change to the scientific content of IRIS; rather, it presents the data base in a more easily navigable and searchable format. The new redesign will be available by August 1, 2001, for public view and comment for 60 days. It will be accessible from the IRIS web site at [www.epa.gov/iris](http://www.epa.gov/iris). EPA invites IRIS users to visit the new site and provide feedback to several questions posted. After the test period ends and all comments are considered, EPA plans to replace the current web site with the redesigned site.

Dated: July 10, 2001.

**George W. Alapas,**

*Acting Director, National Center for Environmental Assessment.*

[FR Doc. 01-18197 Filed 7-19-01; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6560-50-P

#### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

[FRL-7015-6]

##### Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS); Notice; Request for Information

**AGENCY:** Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

**ACTION:** Notice; request for information on needs for health assessments on EPA's Integrated Risk Information System.

**SUMMARY:** IRIS is an EPA data base that contains EPA scientific consensus positions on human health effects that may result from chronic exposure to chemical substances in the environment. On February 22, 2001, EPA announced the 2001 IRIS agenda and solicited scientific information from the public for consideration in assessing health effects from specific chemical substances. Today, EPA is requesting information from the public to define needs for new and revised health assessments on IRIS in 2002-2005.

**DATES:** Information should be submitted by September 18, 2001.

**ADDRESSES:** Please send information in response to this notice to the IRIS Submission Desk, c/o Courtney R. Johnson, National Center for Environmental Assessment (8601D), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Washington, DC 20460. Alternatively, you may submit your response electronically to [IRIS.desk@epa.gov](mailto:IRIS.desk@epa.gov). Electronic information must be submitted in WordPerfect or as an ASCII file. Information will also be accepted on 3.5" floppy disks. All information in electronic form must be identified as an IRIS Submission.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** For general information on the IRIS program, contact Amy Mills, National Center for Environmental Assessment (Mail Code 8601D), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20460, or call (202) 564-3204, or send electronic mail inquiries to [mills.amy@epa.gov](mailto:mills.amy@epa.gov).

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### Background

IRIS is an EPA data base containing Agency consensus scientific positions

on potential adverse human health effects that may result from chronic (or lifetime) exposure to chemical substances found in the environment. IRIS currently provides health effects information on over 500 specific chemical substances.

IRIS contains substance-specific summaries of qualitative and quantitative health information in support of the first two steps of the risk assessment process, *i.e.*, hazard identification and dose-response evaluation. Combined with specific situational exposure assessment information, the summary health hazard information in IRIS may be used as a source in evaluating potential public health risks from environmental contaminants.

##### History of the IRIS Program

EPA began the IRIS program in 1985 to build consensus opinions across the Agency on the potential health effects of chemical substances of concern to Program Offices and Regional Offices. The IRIS program has continually provided toxicity values and carcinogenicity assessments for the hazard and dose-response components of risk assessment. IRIS information has been used by Agency regulatory offices and in site-specific risk assessments. States and other organizations have also chosen to adopt IRIS information in their risk-based decision-making.

In response to public interest in access to IRIS, EPA released IRIS to the public in 1988 (53 FR 20162). In 1993, EPA requested public comment on peer review procedures for IRIS health assessments and on public involvement in IRIS assessment development and review (58 FR 11490). In 1995, EPA initiated the IRIS Pilot, whereby various improvements were tested including procedures for peer review, public involvement, and consensus review. Many of these procedures were then adopted for the permanent IRIS program (61 FR 14570). In 1996, EPA provided access to IRIS on EPA's Internet site, enabling easier access for the Agency and the public. In 1997, EPA made the Internet site the official repository for IRIS.

Between 1998 and 2001, EPA has implemented numerous improvements identified in the IRIS Pilot, including publishing an annual **Federal Register** document announcing the IRIS agenda for the year, and requesting scientific information from the public to consider in new assessments. During this period, EPA also initiated evaluations or re-evaluations of over 100 chemicals for the IRIS program. As the use and demand for the IRIS data base continues

to grow, EPA plans to continue updating older assessments and adding new ones.

### Process for Building and Updating IRIS

EPA will continue building and updating the IRIS data base in 2002. The Agency recognizes that many of the assessments on IRIS may need updating to incorporate new scientific information and methodologies. Further, many additional substances may be candidates for adding to IRIS. However, due to limited resources in the Agency to address the spectrum of needs, EPA develops an annual list of priority substances for assessment development. Substances are chosen for one or more of the following reasons: (1) Agency statutory, regulatory, or program implementation need; (2) new scientific information or methodology is available that might significantly change current IRIS information; (3) interest to other levels of government or the public; and (4) most of the scientific assessment work has been completed while meeting other Agency requirements and only a modest additional effort will be needed to complete the review and documentation for IRIS. The annual agenda is then refined based on available staff and other resources to carry out the assessments.

### Purpose of the Needs Assessment

EPA is responding to the U.S. Senate request that EPA solicit public input in defining needs for new and updated specific chemical substances on the IRIS data base. Senate Report 106-410 specifically states,

The committee requests that EPA conduct needs assessments with public input to determine the need for increasing [this] annual rate of updates to existing IRIS files during 2002-2005, as well as the need to add new IRIS files for chemicals not now included.

Information submitted in response to this **Federal Register** document will be used to help plan the IRIS agenda for 2002-2005. Specifically, the Agency is seeking information addressing the following questions:

1. How do you/your organization use IRIS? What actions or decisions are based on information in IRIS?
2. What additional chemical substance assessments do you need on IRIS? For each, why is this assessment needed?
3. For existing chemical substance assessments on IRIS, which do you think are in greatest need of scientific update? What is the basis for identifying these assessments for update (e.g., newer study available, newer methodology to apply)?

4. What additional types of substance-specific Agency consensus information would you like to have on IRIS? For example, EPA is considering adding consensus health assessments for exposures of less than chronic duration, such as acute and possibly other subchronic exposures. Would these new types of information be of value to you? If so, how important would this information be to you in comparison to having updated information on chronic health effects?

5. EPA is currently testing collaborative efforts with external parties on the development of assessments for IRIS (66 FR 11165). The purpose is to involve the scientific knowledge and capability of organizations outside of EPA to improve the quality of IRIS supporting documents. External parties may include other government agencies, industries, universities, professional organizations, and other non-governmental organizations. EPA will evaluate the efficiency of the process and quality of documents produced to determine if the collaborative program should be expanded. Do you favor EPA's collaboration with external parties as a means of developing assessments for IRIS? If so, how could this collaboration be conducted?

EPA will compile the information received from the public in response to this notice along with internal EPA assessments of need, and develop a summary document that will be available for viewing on the IRIS web site. EPA expects to complete the summary document in December 2001.

Dated: July 10, 2001.

**George W. Alapas,**

*Acting Director, National Center for Environmental Assessment.*

[FR Doc. 01-18198 Filed 7-19-01; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 6560-50-P**

## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

[FRL-7015-4]

### Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health Act; Announcement of Public Forums for Draft National Beach Guidance and Grant Performance Criteria for Recreation Waters

**AGENCY:** Environmental Protection Agency.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is announcing five public forums to assist the public in their

review of the draft National Beach Guidance and Grant Performance Criteria for Recreation Waters and in preparing comments. EPA has developed and is requesting public comments on the draft Guidance, and the document describes specific performance criteria for grant applicants to meet to be awarded grants.

Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health Act (BEACH Act) signed into law on October 10, 2000, amends the Clean Water Act (CWA), to reduce the risk of disease to users of the Nation's recreational waters. The BEACH Act authorizes the EPA to publish performance criteria for monitoring and assessment of coastal recreation waters and the prompt notification of exceeding applicable water quality standards. The BEACH Act also requires EPA to develop the criteria in cooperation with appropriate Federal, State, tribal, and local officials and provide public notice and an opportunity for comment.

EPA is now encouraging all Federal, State, and local environmental and health officials, environmental organizations, and the public to attend the public forums and submit comments on the Guidance.

**DATES:** See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** for dates of public forums.

**ADDRESSES:** A copy of the document can also be obtained by downloading the file located at [www.epa.gov/waterscience/beaches/grants](http://www.epa.gov/waterscience/beaches/grants) on the Internet. See **SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION** for locations of public forums.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Mimi Dannel, 202-260-1897.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

### I. Guidance Document

#### *What Is the Statutory Authority for the Guidance Document?*

The statutory authority for BEACH Guidance Document is section 406(b) of the Clean Water Act as amended by the BEACH Act, Pub. L. No. 106-284, 114 Stat. 970 (2000). It provides in part: "The Administrator must publish performance criteria for monitoring and assessment of coastal recreation waters and the prompt notification of exceeding applicable water quality standards."

#### *What Are the Major Components of the Guidance Document?*

The document contains five chapters and accompanying appendices which provide both guidance and grant performance criteria. Chapter 1 explains the legislation and human health concerns with microbial contamination of recreation waters. Chapter 2 describes