

Fact Sheet

Making Government Run Better: A New Way Forward

How Congress can reduce spending while advancing the science of safety testing

ANIMAL TESTING

As the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction works to achieve massive cuts in federal spending, one of the ways to reach this goal is to require the National Toxicology Program (NTP) and its individual agency contributors to cease funding unnecessary animal tests and refocus their safety testing research on “21st century” approaches advocated by the National Academies, saving at least \$500 million over 10 years.

COST

Extravagant and wasteful spending is evident throughout many NTP toxicological testing programs:

- Since the 1970s, more than \$2 billion tax dollars have been spent on long-term animal tests to identify rodent carcinogens. Each 2-species test costs approximately \$4 million and takes up to 5 years to design, conduct and analyze – and to date, the NTP has characterized the results of 262 of these individual tests on mice and rats as “inadequate” or impossible to interpret. U.S. and international scientific authorities have long questioned the value of the mouse test and called for it to be abandoned (would have meant past savings of close to \$1 billion). NTP discontinuation of the mouse test could cut its future expenditures in this area by half.
- For many years the NTP has operated a program that has actively invited and encouraged public nominations of chemicals and other substances for toxicological study at the government’s expense. Among the substances that have been subject to costly and intensive testing are ginseng, aloe vera, and numerous other natural products with long histories of safe use.
- The NTP has recently adopted a new study design for reproductive toxicity testing on animals that is even substantially more costly and time consuming than its previous approach – or any equivalent testing procedure in mainstream use by any other U.S. agency or industry.
- The NTP has recently awarded \$30 million in grants toward further testing of the plasticizer Bisphenol A, despite the enormous body of existing test data for this chemical which should already have led to regulatory action.

SAVINGS

Savings of at least \$500 million over 10 years could be realized by curtailing extravagant and unnecessary testing by the NTP and its individual agency contributors by realigning their activities with the National Academies’ vision of “Toxicity Testing in the 21st Century.” For 1/5 the cost of a multi-year NTP carcinogenicity study, the NIH Chemical Genomics Center reports that it is able to screen up to 1000 chemicals in 200 different robot-automated cell or gene tests in as little as 2 weeks (click [here](#) for more information). Our nation’s leading science advisors have called for a wholesale paradigm shift away from classical animal tests toward molecular, cellular and computational tools. Although these tools cannot yet fully replace conventional test methods, many authorities – including federal agencies – believe they hold the key to cheaper, faster and more human-relevant safety testing for the 21st century.

PROPOSED LANGUAGE

No funds shall be used by the NTP or individual contributors to the program in their respective programs for 1) rodent carcinogenicity testing; 2) animal-based testing for reproductive toxicity using a method other than the OECD “extended one-generation” study; 3) animal-based testing of plant-derived substances or extracts; 4) solicitation of public nominations of substances for animal-based testing or animal-based testing of substances so nominated; or 5) animal-based re-testing of substances in place of regulatory action. Funding of the NTP High Throughput Screening Initiative shall be maintained at current levels for the remainder of fiscal year 2012.



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