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FACT SHEET

PROPOSED RULE TO EXCLUDE T-BUTYL ACETATE FROM CONTROL AS A VOLATILE ORGANIC COMPOUND (VOC)

TODAY'S ACTION...

- Today, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is proposing that t-butyl acetate no longer be regulated as a volatile organic compound (VOC) under the Clean Air Act.

- VOCs contribute significantly to the formation of ground-level ozone (smog). Exposure to ground-level ozone can cause serious respiratory illness.

- Today's action would allow, but does not require, states to remove regulatory controls on t-butyl acetate that are part of state implementation plans designed to help states meet the national air quality standards for ground-level ozone.

WHY IS EPA PROPOSING TO EXCLUDE T-BUTYL ACETATE AS VOC?

- EPA is proposing to exclude t-butyl acetate as a VOC because scientific evidence shows it is "negligibly reactive," meaning it contributes little or nothing to the formation of smog. Since EPA does not believe that t-butyl acetate contributes to the smog problem, today's proposal to exclude the compound as a VOC would help states to focus on controlling emissions of demonstrated ozone precursors in order to meet the national ambient air quality standard for ground-level ozone.

- A compound may be excluded as a VOC as a result of public petitions and new scientific data that demonstrate its negligible effect on the formation of smog. Since 1977, EPA has removed 41 specific compounds or classes of compounds from the list of VOCs that contribute to smog formation. EPA's policy on VOCs was codified on February 3, 1992 in a revised regulation, "Requirements for Preparation, Adoption, and Submittal of State Implementation Plans."

- EPA will carefully review any additional scientific data and consider all public comments before making a final decision to exclude t-butyl acetate from regulation as a VOC. The public comment period will last for 60 days from the date of publication of the proposal notice.

HOW DOES TODAY'S ACTION IMPACT THE ENVIRONMENT?

- T-butyl acetate is not listed as a hazardous air pollutant under the Clean Air Act. In fact,

t-butyl acetate is a potential substitute for other solvents that are hazardous air pollutants. Hazardous air pollutants are also known as air toxics; these are pollutants which are known or suspected to cause cancer or other serious health effects such as birth defects or reproductive effects.

- Since t-butyl acetate contains no chlorine, it does not deplete stratospheric ozone.

- Therefore, the presence of t-butyl acetate in the air does not appear to negatively impact human health or the environment.

HOW DOES TODAY'S ACTION PROVIDE FLEXIBILITY AND REGULATORY RELIEF TO INDUSTRY?

- By excluding t-butyl acetate as a VOC, today's action would make it easier and less expensive for industry to use this compound as a solvent in a variety of products including paints, inks and adhesives. T-butyl acetate may be used as a substitute for other solvents which are more harmful to the environment and which are more strictly regulated.

FOR MORE INFORMATION...

- Interested parties can download the proposal from EPA's web site on the Internet under "recent actions" at the following address: *http://www.epa/gov/ttn/oarpg*. For further information about the rule, contact Bill Johnson at EPA's Office of Air Quality Planning an Standards at (919) 541-5245.

- EPA's Office of Air and Radiation's home page on the Internet contains a wide range of information on the air pollution programs including air toxics issues. The Office of Air and Radiation's home page address is: *http://www.epa.gov/oar/*.