

NATIONAL TOXICOLOGY PROGRAM
Statement on
CENTER FOR THE EVALUATION OF RISKS TO HUMAN REPRODUCTION
AND SCIENCES INTERNATIONAL

March 27, 2007

The National Toxicology Program (NTP) is committed to safeguarding the integrity of its science, including reviews by its Center for the Evaluation of Risks to Human Reproduction (CERHR), which is currently considering the risk to human health of bisphenol-A (BPA). Sciences International (SI) is the contractor that provides administrative and logistical support to CERHR expert panels. Recently, concerns were raised regarding potential business ties that SI or its employees may have. Although SI does not have responsibilities that would directly influence the outcome of CERHR decisions regarding BPA, because of concerns about potential conflicts of interest, the NTP has implemented a thorough review of all aspects of the SI contract and the nature of services provided by SI to the CERHR.

Pending the completion of the review, and prior to the CERHR decision regarding BPA, the NTP has taken the following precautionary steps to ensure continued public confidence in the work of the NTP and the CERHR.

1. NTP has issued a "Stop Work" order on the SI contract while the review of the contractor's performance regarding BPA and 20 other chemicals reviewed by CERHR proceeds. As an added precaution, SI has been removed from substantive involvement with the BPA review.
2. NTP is convening a working group of a federal advisory committee that will include contract professionals and scientists, from within and outside the National Institutes of Health (NIH), to evaluate existing NTP contracts and to assess each contractor's business relationships for potential conflicts and consider what recommendations are appropriate. They will be requested to report their findings to the NTP by July 1, 2007.
3. NTP is developing a strong conflict of interest clause to be inserted in all contracts of this type.
4. NTP has introduced a fourth public participation step in the review of BPA. Since the expert panel evaluating BPA did not conclude its work earlier this month, the interim draft expert panel report will be posted to CERHR's website at <http://cerhr.niehs.nih.gov/>, and an opportunity for public comment will be provided.

Without prejudging the outcome of the review, the NTP is especially concerned that SI has seemingly implied in its promotional material that its role as a Federal Government Contractor would be advantageous to regulated industries. As far as the NTP is concerned, such an implication is inappropriate, and it is understandable how such statements would lead to concerns about potential conflicts of interest.