United States Department of the Interior

U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
12201 Sunrise Valley Drive
Reston, VA 20192

In Reply, Refer To:
MS953
GS11001130

December 8, 2011

Rear Admiral William S. Stokes
Director, National Toxicology Program
Interagency Center for the Evaluation of
Alternative Toxicological Methods
National Institutes of Health
National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences
P.O. Box 1223, Mail Code K2-16
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709

Dear Rear Admiral Stokes:

In a letter dated June 30, 2011, to Secretary of the Interior, Mr. Kenneth Salazar, Dr. Linda S. Birnbaum of the National Institutes of Health requests Departmental review of the murine local lymph node assay to be used in potency categorization of chemicals that may cause allergic contact dermatitis in humans. As requested by Dr. Birnbaum, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) is responding for the Department to you.

This document was reviewed and commented upon by Department of the Interior scientists, and found to be well-written and scientifically-robust. Please note that our Department conducts ecotoxicological research and monitoring of fish and wildlife, and has very limited regulatory authority for chemicals and pharmaceuticals. At present, we do not evaluate the potential of substances that cause allergic contact dermatitis. Should the Department become involved in such evaluations, it will most certainly consider use and adoption of the recommended murine local lymph node assays.

The Department of the Interior continues to support new methods and strategies that reduce the number of test animals in such evaluations, and will alert Institutional Animal Care and Use Committees at our research facilities about these new procedures. We are pleased to assist in such reviews, and will gladly provide in depth comments on those test methods that are more closely allied to our mission.

Sincerely,

/s/
David P. Russ
Regional Executive, Northeast Area