



MEMORANDUM

Via E-Mail

DATE: October 2, 2009

TO: Clients and Friends

FROM: The Acta Group, L.L.C.

RE: EPA Announces Research Strategy to Study Nanomaterials

On September 30, 2009, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced the availability of the *Nanomaterial Research Strategy* (Strategy), which EPA describes as its new research strategy to understand better how manufactured nanomaterials may harm human health and the environment. The Strategy outlines what research EPA intends to support over the next several years to generate information about the safe use of nanotechnology and products that contain nanoscale materials. The Strategy also includes research into ways nanotechnology can be used to clean up toxic chemicals in the environment. In its announcement, EPA states that its role among federal agencies “is to determine the potential hazards of nanotechnology and develop approaches to reduce or minimize any risks identified. As part of the strategy, researchers are investigating widely used nanomaterials, such as carbon nanotubes, which are used in vehicles, sports equipment and electronics; and titanium dioxide, which is used in paints, cosmetics and sunscreens.” The Strategy is available on the Internet at http://www.epa.gov/nanoscience/files/nanotech_research_strategy_final.pdf.

According to the Strategy, the purpose of EPA’s Nanomaterial Research Program is to conduct focused research to inform nanomaterial safety decisions that EPA may make under the various environmental statutes for which it is responsible. EPA states that it recognizes that the information generated is also likely to have use in areas beyond its purview. EPA’s in-house research program will leverage results from EPA grant programs, as well as collaborate with grantees to address the many research issues outlined in the Strategy.



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The Strategy focuses on four areas that, according to EPA, take advantage of its scientific expertise, as well as fill gaps not addressed by other organizations:

1. Identifying sources, fate, transport, and exposure;
2. Understanding human health and ecological effects to inform risk assessments and test methods;
3. Developing risk assessment approaches; and
4. Preventing and mitigating risks.

EPA states that its Nanomaterial Research Program is intended to provide information to support nanomaterial safety decisions. The Strategy describes eight “key” science questions, which EPA intends to help decision makers answer the following questions:

- What nanomaterials, in what forms, are most likely to result in environmental exposure?
- What particular nanomaterial properties may raise toxicity concerns?
- Are nanomaterials with these properties likely to be present in environmental media or biological systems at concentrations of concern, and what does this mean for risk?
- If we think that the answer to the previous question is “yes,” can we change properties or mitigate exposure?

According to EPA, providing information to answer these questions “will serve the public by enabling decisions that minimize potential adverse environmental impacts, and thereby maximize the net societal benefit from the development and use of manufactured nanomaterials.”

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We hope this information is helpful. As always, please call if you have any questions.