Regulatory Studies Center
THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Enhancing Science and Policy for Chemical Risk Assessments

Regulatory Studies Center
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Risk assessment plays an important role in developing effective regulations, especially in the areas of health and environmental policy. A recent workshop at the George Washington University explored best practices for Enhancing Science and Policy for Chemical Risk Assessments. This summary highlights the themes of the workshop. We expect to post presentations and a more detailed summary of the afternoon discussions soon. Given the interest in the topic, and the constructive discussion the workshop facilitated, we also expect to follow the dialogue with future workshops and recommendations for improving how science is used in rulemaking.

Subject matter experts from academia, government, NGOs, and stakeholder organizations, along with a sophisticated audience of about 100 people, focused on three areas: data evaluation, data integration, and peer review. The workshop built on recent reports from the Bipartisan Policy Center, the National Academy of Sciences, and the Keystone Group, and is expected to contribute to an ongoing ACUS project focused on best practices for the use of science in the administrative process.

Susan Dudley, Director of the George Washington University Regulatory Studies Center, and Paul Verkuil, Chairman of the Administrative Conference of the United States welcomed participants and laid out the objectives of the workshop and the Administrative Conference's role in advising federal agencies on the use of science in administrative procedure. George Gray, Director of the George Washington University Center for Risk Science and Public Health and Professor of Environmental and Occupational Health, and David Goldston, Director of Government Affairs for the Natural Resources Defense Council and former Executive Director of the Bipartisan Policy Center's Science for Policy Project set the stage for the day's discussion.

Rick Becker, senior scientist with the American Chemistry Council, moderated the first panel on data evaluation and integrity, which featured presentations by Chris Bevan, managing principal with CJB Consulting and Anna Lowit, senior scientist in the Office of Pesticide Programs' Health Effects Division at the Environmental Protection Agency. Commenting on these presentations were Lorenz Rhomberg, principal at Gradient, Marty Stephens, senior research associate at the Center for Alternatives to Animal Testing at Johns Hopkins University, and George Gray of the GW School of Public Health. Panelists emphasized the importance of objective, ex ante procedures for evaluating data quality and integrating reproducible, reliable, and relevant data in a risk assessment, as well as the importance of a transparent, public process. They discussed existing procedures for critical evaluation of data and alternative hypotheses, based on practices in pesticide risk assessment, toxicology, and evidence-based medicine.

Sally Kane, president of the [Society for Risk Analysis National Capital Area Chapter](), moderated the panel on peer review. [Rick Reiss](), principal scientist at [Exponent](), offered insights from his experience as editor of the journal *Risk Analysis*. Discussants [Francesca Grifo](), senior scientist and science policy fellow at the [Union of Concerned Scientists]() and [Don Elliot](), adjunct professor at [Yale Law School](), and partner at [Willkie Farr & Gallagher LLP]() commented on issues related to selection of peer reviewers, including bias and conflict of interest, approaches for ensuring that agencies respond to peer reviewers' recommendations, and the feasibility of establishing government-wide procedures. All panelists reconvened for a final wrap up session with active audience participation.

The workshop was hosted by the [GW Regulatory Studies Center](), the [George Washington University Center for Risk Science and Public Health](), the [Society for Risk Analysis National Capital Area Chapter](), and the [American Chemistry Council](), in collaboration with the [Administrative Conference of the United States]().