



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

JUL 26 2000

OFFICE OF
ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION

Mr. Jim Tozzi
Center for Regulatory Effectiveness
11 Dupont Circle, N.W. Suite 700
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Mr. Tozzi:

Thank you for your letter and accompanying petition for rule making dated May 2, 2000, addressed to Edwin A. Levine. Mr. Levine forwarded your letter to my office for response.

Your petition asks that we consider the following:

- (1) Implementation, through the issuance of regulations, of the data quality directives contained in the Report of the Senate Appropriations Committee on the VA-HUD and Independent Agencies Appropriations Act for Fiscal 2000; and,
- (2) Delaying action on a petition for regulation of greenhouse gases that EPA received from the International Center for Technology Assessment (C.A.), until EPA issues data quality regulations.

Concerning the first issue, EPA does not believe that rule making is necessary because the Office of Environmental Information (OEI) is currently developing and implementing procedures to improve data quality consistent with the Senate Appropriations Committee's report.

Specifically, EPA and several States, through the Information Management Working Group (IMWG) of the Environmental Council of the States (ECOS), have worked closely over the past year to improve procedures and practices for handling environmental data and producing accurate information products. In November 1999, EPA and ECOS sponsored a public forum for stakeholders on issues relating to the development, management and dissemination of information. Following that Forum, an EPA-State Action Team was organized to design a process for involving interested parties in the development of significant EPA and State information products. This process will provide ways to notify stakeholders of upcoming products that may be of interest. The Action Team is considering issuing an "information products bulletin" to provide such notice. The first "information products bulletin" is scheduled to be published by March 2001. It also will afford opportunities for interested parties to comment on these products. Once the proposed process design is complete, the Action Team plans to solicit and respond to public comment.

Internet Address (URL) = <http://www.epa.gov>

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OEI also has initiated an error correction process ensuring the prompt correction of data errors in existing EPA databases. Suspected data errors in EPA national data systems which are available to the public via the Internet, can now be reported to the Agency on-line. The person who reports the error receives a confirmation that EPA has received the error report, as well as a follow-up response describing how the error was addressed. This process is described at the following Websites:

http://www.epa.gov/enviro/html/whats_new.html (this site contains general introductory information about the error correction process under the July 13, 2000, entry)

http://www.epa.gov/enviro/html/error/flow_chart.htm (this site contains the error correction process diagram)

http://oaspub.epa.gov/enviro/ets_grab_error.smart_form (this site contains the online form for reporting errors)

http://www.epa.gov/enviro/html/error/css_page_3.html (this site defines customer service standards for error correction)

The error correction process is currently available for most data bases in the Envirofacts data warehouse at www.epa.gov/enviro. We expect to implement the process for additional EPA data bases by September 2000.

EPA believes that these initiatives will result in the prompt correction of data errors and contribute to improved data quality. Accordingly, rulemaking is not needed. If you would like more information concerning EPA's Information Products Bulletin, please contact Elaine Stanley, Director, Office of Information Analysis and Access, at 202-260-6670 or stanley.elaine@epa.gov. For additional information regarding EPA's Error Correction Process, please contact Mark Luttner, Director, Office of Information Collection, at 202-260-4030 or luttner.mark@epa.gov.

With respect to your second issue, on October 20, 1999, EPA received a petition from CTA and other entities requesting that the Agency regulate greenhouse gas emissions from new motor vehicles. That petition is being addressed by EPA's Office of Air and Radiation (OAR). EPA has made no decision whether to grant or deny the petition. EPA has established a public docket and plans soon to publish a notice asking for public comment on the petition. EPA is placing a copy of your letter in the public docket which EPA has established for the CTA Petition (docket number A-2000-04).

Your request to delay any action on the CTA petition will be considered along with all other public comments that EPA receives. Any concerns that you or other commenters have regarding the quality of the scientific bases for the petition, including information cited from EPA Websites, may be raised through the public comment process, and will be considered by EPA at that time. Therefore, we conclude that there is no need for the Agency to delay requesting comment on the CTA Petition and first engage in a separate process to address your concerns about information on EPA's Global Warming Website.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Lutner', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mark Lutner, Director
Office of Information Collection

CC: Elaine Stanley, OEI
Edwin Levine, OEI
Robert Perciasepe, OAR
Leslye Fraser, OGC