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WVMA statement on human health criteria development

As Senate Bill 163 makes its way to Gov. Jim Justice for approval, the West Virginia Manufacturers Association wants to thank the West Virginia Legislature and the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection for allowing the time necessary to establish accurate human health criteria for West Virginia.

At the same time, we want to express our disappointment in the failure to pass SCR 39 creating a Joint Select Committee on Requirements Governing Water Quality Resources in West Virginia. Absent this commission, the WVMA urges the Legislature to provide a forum for further discussion and education related to West Virginia's regulatory structure and water quality issues.

Given the public's interest in West Virginia's water quality standards and the U.S. Environmental Protection's Agency's recommendations for human health criteria, the WVMA is providing a summary of our path forward related to the state specific study we have agreed to complete and share with the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection.

Human health criteria are developed after consideration of several factors such as cancer slope factors, relative source contribution, body weight, fish and water consumption, type and trophic level of fish consumed, etc. Changing one of the factors changes the ultimate criterion. For example, the calculated criteria could be higher in states where the amount of water people drink less than the national average that the EPA used in developing default criteria. In the case of the WVMA work, experts are not looking at body weight or water consumption, but are evaluating several other factors, primarily trophic levels of fish consumed in West Virginia and confirming that the cancer slope factors and relative source contributions are consistent throughout West Virginia's environmental programs. Other factors may need to be investigated, but at this point that is undetermined.

During several legislative committee meetings concerning Senate Bill 163, we have openly shared this approach to criteria re-evaluation. Unfortunately, some reporters who should know better have been trying to resurrect a statement that does not represent the work we are presently undertaking. It is disappointing that they do so, because it tends to bring discredit to reporters at a time when we need trusted news gatherers to inform the public about legislation.

We will share our findings with the WV DEP by October 2019. For updates, please visit the resource tab at www.wvma.com.

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About the WVMA: *comprised of more than 180 companies representing a broad range of manufacturing sectors, the WVMA is a trade statewide association dedicated to supporting the interests of manufacturing in West Virginia. Since 1915, the WVMA has represented the quality and diversity of manufacturing in the Mountain State through policy/advocacy efforts, a focus on workforce development, and providing a strong network for West Virginia's manufacturers. West Virginia's manufacturing industry employees nearly 47,000 at competitive wage levels, accounting for nearly 10 percent of the state's total output. Learn more at www.wvma.com.*