pesticide products. Since FFDCA section 408 makes no distinction between active and inert ingredients of a pesticide product, EPA may use this tiered data screening methodology when evaluating any pesticide chemical of apparent low or low/moderate toxicity, regardless of whether it might be characterized as an active or inert ingredient.

At this time, EPA has completed review of two tolerance exemption petitions and over 200 tolerance reassessments for low or low/moderate toxicity chemicals using essentially the process described in this paper. More reviews are underway. Based on these experiences, OPP intends to continue its chemical-by-chemical reviews of pesticide chemicals according to the process described herein for the foreseeable future. However, EPA remains interested in further improvements in the efficiency and reliability of its process, and therefore welcomes comments from interested persons.

After evaluating several alternatives, OPP believes that a screening methodology is the most appropriate way to handle the variety of hazard and exposure issues posed by inert ingredients. This screening methodology will allow OPP to make decisions in a streamlined manner for low or low/moderate toxicity chemical substances. By being able to quickly review and approve the use of these chemical substances, more low or low/moderate toxicity chemical substances will be available for use in pesticide products. OPP will also be able to focus its resources on those chemical substances of potentially higher toxicity requiring in-depth evaluation.

OPP has incorporated elements of a tiered data approach into this methodology. For these lower toxicity chemicals, OPP would use existing information on the hazard potential (both human health and ecological) of a chemical substance as the basis for deciding if additional data are needed to support the use of the chemical. The hazard potential - the toxicity - is the driving force in determining tier placement. Chemical substances that are of low or low/moderate toxicity may be appropriately placed in a lower tier, with fewer data needed to make the safety finding. Chemicals of higher toxicity that can not be appropriately addressed in the lower tiers would be evaluated in a manner substantially similar to that of an active ingredient.

The process described in this paper has three tiers, with the first tier being subdivided into Tiers 1a and 1b. The process begins with a preliminary Tier determination that is based on widely available information on chemical families and categories which includes the hazards associated with these chemicals. Later as the Agency begins to review chemical-specific or surrogate information in the open literature, the preliminary Tier determination may be revised.

The methodology is intended to provide guidance to EPA personnel and decision-makers, and to pesticide registrants. The policies and process described in this methodology are not binding on either EPA or pesticide registrants, and EPA may modify or disregard the process described herein where circumstances warrant and without prior notice. Likewise, pesticide registrants may assert that this process is not appropriate generally or not applicable to a specific pesticide chemical or situation.

III. Questions/Issues for Public Comment

• A significant challenge faced in developing a methodology for a comprehensive assessment program for chemicals of low or low/moderate toxicity is determining the most appropriate procedure for evaluating such a diverse group of substances, with a very wide range of physical/chemical characteristics. Does the screening approach as described in the methodology paper reflect a workable, logical approach?

• It is likely that a large percentage of inert ingredients are not likely to be of significant toxicological concern. The Agency's expectation is that on the order of 50% of inert ingredients would be of low or low/moderate risk. At the same time, EPA must be able to identify problematic inert ingredients and then have the resources to take appropriate action to analyze and reduce these risks. Would this methodology give the Agency the necessary flexibility while allowing for an effficient and productive process?

• Several sources for credible, scientifically valid chemical information are given in the policy paper. What other possible sources of readily available credible, scientifically valid chemical information are available?

• The Agency has described, as best possible at this beginning stage, the process that would be used to evaluate inert ingredients as well as the role played by a petitioner for a tolerance or tolerance exemption or those seeking to support a chemical during tolerance reassessment. What additional information would be helpful to the regulated community?

List of Subjects

Environmental protection, Administrative practice and procedure, Agricultural commodities, Pesticides and pests.

Dated: June 7, 2002.

Marcia E. Mulkey,

Director, Office of Pesticide Programs.

[FR Doc. 02–14996 Filed 6–12–02; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6560–50–S

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

[FRL–7230–6]

Persistent Organic Pollutants

AGENCY: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

ACTION: Notice of availability.

SUMMARY: This notice announces the availability of a final technical report titled, The Foundation for Global Action on Persistent Organic Pollutants: A United States Perspective (EPA/600/P–01/003F, March 2002), which was prepared by the Office of Research and Development's (ORD) National Center for Environmental Assessment (NCEA). The purpose of this report is to inform decision makers, general academia, and the public on the scientific foundation and relevance to the United States of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs).

ADDRESSES: The document is available electronically on NCEA's Web site at *www.epa.gov/ncea*, under the What's New or Publications menus. The CD–ROM version and a limited number of paper copies will be available shortly from the EPA's National Service Center for Environmental Publications (NSCEP), PO Box 42419, Cincinnati, OH 45242; telephone: 1–800–490–9198 or 513–489–8190; facsimile: 513–489–8695. Please provide your name and mailing address and the title and EPA number of the requested publication.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For further information on The Foundation for Global Action on Persistent Organic Pollutants: A United States Perspective, please contact Dr. Bruce Rodan, National Center for Environmental Assessment (8601D), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20460; Telephone: 202–564–3329; facsimile: (202) 565–0090; e-mail: *rodan.bruce@epa.gov*; or the Technical Information Staff, National Center for Environmental Assessment/Washington Office (8623D), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency,

1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20460. Telephone: 202–564–3261; facsimile: 202–565–0050; e-mail: *nceadc.comment@epa.gov.*

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Foundation for Global Action on Persistent Organic Pollutants: A United States Perspective, developed by scientists from EPA, other federal and state agencies, and the academic community, is a technical support document aimed at informing decision makers, general academia, and the public on the scientific foundation and relevance to the United States of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs). POPs are a small group of organic chemicals exhibiting the combined properties of persistence, bioaccumulation, toxicity, and long-range environmental transport. The report, which has been through internal review, independent external peer review, and public review and comment, summarizes data available in the peer reviewed literature on the 12 POPs chemicals initially included in the Stockholm Convention and provides an overview of the risks posed to U.S. ecosystems and the public. This small group of chemicals have been major contributors to toxic environmental pollution in the United States and worldwide. The 12 POPs included in the Convention are: aldrin, dieldrin, endrin, DDT, chlordane, heptachlor, mirex, toxaphene, hexachlorobenzene, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), polychlorinated dibenzo-p-dioxins, and polychlorinated dibenzofurans. The Stockholm Convention on POPs was signed by EPA Administrator Christine Todd Whitman on behalf of the United States in May 2001, and has been submitted to Congress for ratification.

Dated: June 7, 2002.

Art Payne,

Acting Director, National Center for Environmental Assessment.

[FR Doc. 02–14993 Filed 6–12–02; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6560–50–P

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

[FRL–7227–3]

Clean Water Act Section 303(d): Final Agency Action on 98 Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) and Final Agency Action on 20 Determinations That TMDLs Are Not Needed

AGENCY: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

ACTION: Notice of availability.

SUMMARY: This notice announces final agency action on 98 TMDLs prepared by EPA Region 6 for waters listed in Louisiana's Calcasieu and Ouachita river basins, under section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act (CWA). This notice also announces final agency action removing 20 waterbody/pollutant combinations from the Louisiana 303(d) list because TMDLs are not needed. The EPA evaluated these waters and prepared the 98 TMDLs needed in response to a consent decree entered in the lawsuit *Sierra Club, et al.* v. *Clifford et al.,* No. 96–0527, (E.D. La.). Documents from the administrative record files for the 20 determinations that TMDLs are not needed and for the 98 TMDLs, including TMDL calculations and the responses to comments, may be viewed at *www.epa.gov/region6/water/tmdl.htm.*

EPA believes that the public notice and comment period provided for these TMDLs was adequate. During the comment period, EPA received over 400 pages of comments from numerous commenters, including the parties requesting more time. EPA believes that it has appropriately responded to the comments received. Furthermore, EPA is establishing these TMDLs pursuant to deadlines established in a consent decree in the case styled *Sierra Club, et al.* v. *Clifford et al.,* No. 96–0527, (E.D. La.) which does not at this late date permit EPA to grant additional time for public comment, absent relief from the court, which the Agency does not believe is necessary to seek here. However, EPA will continue to accept information submitted regarding potential errors in the TMDL, and/or to meet with parties to discuss potential errors. If the Agency determines that errors were made, it will issue a correction notice or revise the TMDL, as appropriate.

The administrative record files may be obtained by calling or writing Ms. Caldwell at the above address. Please contact Ms. Caldwell to schedule an inspection.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ellen Caldwell at (214) 665–7513.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In 1996, two Louisiana environmental groups, the Sierra Club and Louisiana Environmental Action Network (plaintiffs), filed a lawsuit in Federal Court against the EPA, styled *Sierra Club, et al.* v. *Clifford et al.,* No. 96–0527, (E.D. La.). Among other claims, the plaintiffs alleged that the EPA failed to establish Louisiana TMDLs in a timely manner.

EPA Takes Final Agency Action on 98 TMDLs

By this notice EPA is taking final agency action on the following 98 TMDLs for waters located within the Calcasieu and Ouachita river basins:

Subsegment	Waterbody name	Pollutant
030301	Calcasieu River & Ship Channel—Saltwater Barrier to Moss Lake (Estuarine) (Includes Coon Island and Clooney Island Loops).	Contaminated sediments (Mercury, PAHs, and toxicity).
030306	Bayou Verdine (Estuarine)	Contaminated sediments (4,4'-DDT, Methoxychlor, PAHs, Zinc, Calcium, and toxicity).
030901	Bayou D'Inde—Headwaters to Calcasieu River (Estuarine)	Contaminated sediments (Mercury, toxicity, and organics).
030305	Contraband Bayou (Estuarine)	Copper.
031201	Calcasieu River Basin—Coastal Bays and Gulf Waters to State 3 mile limit	Mercury.
030301	Calcasieu River and Ship Channel—Saltwater Barrier to Moss Lake (Estuarine) (Includes Coon Island and Clooney Island Loops).	Metals (Copper, Lead, and Mercury).
030304	Moss Lake (Estuarine)	Metals (Copper, Mercury).
030306	Bayou Verdine (Estuarine)	Metals (Mercury, Nickel).
030901	Bayou D'Inde—Headwaters to Calcasieu River (Estuarine)	Metals (Copper, Nickel, and Mercury).
030305	Contraband Bayou (Estuarine)	Pathogen indicators.
030701	Bayou Serpent	Pesticides (Fipronil).
030301	Calcasieu River and Ship Channel—Saltwater Barrier to Moss Lake (Estuarine) (Includes Coon Island and Clooney Island Loops).	Priority organics (PAHs).