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**Statement of Environment Subcommittee Chairman David Schweikert (R-Ariz.)  
Hearing on Status of Reforms to EPA's Integrated Risk Information System**

**Chairman Schweikert:** EPA's Integrated Risk Information System, or "IRIS," is designed to provide quantitative and non-quantitative toxicity information for a suite of chemicals. The purpose of this program is to provide basic scientific determinations about what is a safe level and to be used by both EPA program offices and States.

This program has never been authorized by Congress and, over the last decade, has been strongly criticized by the National Academy of Sciences, the Government Accountability Office (it was listed as a "High risk" program in 2009 and remains on the list), the environmental community, industry, and both parties.

The National Research Council rightly found that critical reforms that promote greater openness, transparency, and stakeholder engagement are currently underway by EPA, led by Dr. Ken Olden.

It is important to note that these limited reforms are simply a work in progress – Not a single complete assessment has benefited from this new framework. The NRC report was a snapshot in time, and even these limited reforms have been criticized in some corners.

Specifically, the NRC called on EPA to:

- Increase the transparency of how IRIS assessments are conducted and of the criteria EPA uses;
- Adopt better methodologies for systematic review of the literature, for evaluating evidence, and for integrating evidence across different types of scientific information;
- Rely on more high quality studies;
- Conduct better peer review;
- Increase the role of outside experts; and
- Better manage the program to improve its efficiency and to stay current with scientific advances.

Most of these reforms have focused on process, but there are key areas in the content of these assessments that limit their credibility. States, industry, and the public do not trust the IRIS assessments.

The former Science Advisor for EPA recently wrote in *Nature* that: "Fundamentally, the EPA should replace risk values that are built on science-policy assumptions with risk estimates that acknowledge underlying uncertainties.... The EPA's definitive values are illusions; they conceal uncertainty that cannot be resolved scientifically."