

White Hat Bias Documented in 3rd Data Quality Act Request for Correction Filed by PavementCouncil.org

Source: PAVEMENT COATINGS TECHNOLOGY COUNCIL (PCTC)
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The third DQA Request describes exaggerations to make it appear that refined tar-based pavement sealers (RTS) are associated with elevated cancer risks.

On Sept. 18, PavementCouncil.org submitted its third Data Quality Act (DQA) challenge since May to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). The third DQA Request for Correction (RfC) describes in detail the exaggerations and violations of as many risk assessment guidelines as was needed to make it appear that refined tar-based pavement sealers (RTS) are associated with elevated cancer risks. A team of USGS employees based in Austin, Texas has been leading a concerted nationwide advocacy campaign to ban the manufacture and use of RTS in what is believed to be a case of “White Hat Bias,” the first case to be described in environmental research. White Hat Bias is defined as “bias leading to distortion of information in the service of what may be perceived to be righteous ends,” and was first described in a case involving obesity research. White Hat Bias is conjectured to derive from “feelings of righteous zeal, indignation toward certain aspects of industry, or other factors.” PavementCouncil.org is filing a series of DQA challenges in part to document the scientific inaccuracies, exaggerations, misleading statements, unexplained omissions of data and absence of context in USGS publications about RTS. In the process, the submissions are documenting White Hat Bias within this Department of the Interior agency.

The USGS has indicated that the new risk assessment DQA challenge will be considered separately from the first two challenges. The USGS will post the entire 3rd DQA challenge on its web site, **here** (http://www.usgs.gov/info_qual/). Until then, the challenge can be viewed on the PavementCouncil.org web site, **here** (<http://www.pavementcouncil.org/links>). The **first request** (http://www.usgs.gov/info_qual/documents/Edwards-Wildman-Palmer_PCTC_IQA-Info-Correction-Request051513.pdf), filed May 15, documents that USGS claims that RTS is a significant source of PAHs in urban sediment are inaccurate. The **second request** (http://www.usgs.gov/info_qual/documents/Edwards-Wildman-Palmer_PCTC_Second-IQA-Info-Correction-Request053113.pdf), filed May 31, asks the USGS stop using misleading and inaccurate photographs in its advocacy materials. The USGS consolidated the first two requests and has extended the schedule for its response to mid-November.

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