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August 1, 2017

VIA FEDERAL EXPRESS

Arthur A. Elkins
Office of Inspector General
Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. (2410T)
Washington, DC 20460

Re: Declassified Documents Relating to Monsanto and Roundup

Dear Mr. Elkins:

Thank you for your service and ensuring that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) executes its obligations to the environment and public in a robust, transparent, ethical, and impartial manner. We support your ongoing investigation into possible collusion between Monsanto and the EPA, and whether that alleged collusion influenced the agency's review and registration of Monsanto's widely-used herbicide, glyphosate. Congressman Ted Lieu's concerns, which he raised in his letter to you dated May 19, 2017, are troubling. Regulators must be independent from the companies they regulate. When those lines blur, it raises serious public health concerns and undermines confidence in our regulatory bodies.

We would like to bring to your attention a number of documents discovered in the litigation which were declassified today. On June 30, 2017, our firm, working in collaboration with the Plaintiffs' Steering Committee assigned to spearhead the federal litigation against Monsanto, sent a letter to Monsanto (attached, Tab A) challenging the confidential designation of the documents that we are now turning over to you. Monsanto met with us and stated it would not retract claims of confidentiality over the documents we specifically challenged. However, pursuant to Paragraph 16.3 of the Protective Order entered in the MDL (attached, Tab B), Monsanto was required to file a motion within 30 days of Plaintiffs' June 30, 2017 letter in order to seek continued protection of the documents. Failure to file such motion within 30 days, i.e., July 31, 2017, "automatically waive[s] the confidentiality designation for each challenged designation." *Id.* ¶ 16.3. Since Monsanto did not file any motion seeking continued protection of the documents, it waived confidentiality over them.

Please take a moment to review these documents. They tell an alarming story of Monsanto's collusion with EPA officials, manipulation of scientific data and literature, refusal to thoroughly investigate risks of serious adverse health effects associated with glyphosate, and

previously undisclosed information about how glyphosate is absorbed by the human body. The documents are particularly pertinent to your investigation into whether a collusive relationship between Monsanto and EPA officials potentially thwarted a robust scientific analysis of glyphosate, thereby resulting in glyphosate being registered without a comprehensive review of the available data by impartial regulators.

All of the de-designated documents are included with this letter as well as a chart that we sent to Monsanto as an attachment to our June 30, 2017 correspondence which groups the documents by category and provides a description of each (attached, Tab C). The documents (corresponding numbered tabs) which are the most relevant to the ongoing OIG investigation are grouped under the “*Regulatory & Government*” section (at pages 19-28) of the chart, but a review of the other categories of documents also demonstrates 1) the extent to which Monsanto was aware of the dangers of glyphosate and other substances in its commercially formulated product, Roundup, but refused to conduct further research into the potentially adverse health consequences of Roundup (under *Surfactants, Carcinogenicity & Testing* at 10-16); 2) Monsanto’s manipulation of the scientific literature through ghostwriting and retraction of unfavorable studies (under *Ghostwriting, Peer-Review & Retraction* at 1-10); and 3) the extent to which Monsanto misrepresented glyphosate’s rate of absorption by the human body and Monsanto’s termination of studies which conflicted with the company’s commercial interests by demonstrating higher absorption rates and thus increasing the likelihood of adverse health effects (under *Absorption, Distribution, Metabolism & Excretion* at 16-18).

Of particular interest to your investigation are a series of text messages from 2011 to 2016 between various Monsanto personnel and EPA officials concerned with the regulatory review and registration of glyphosate. For example, following communications with the former Director of the Office of Pesticide Programs (OPP), Mr. Jack Housenger, Mr. Daniel Jenkins from Monsanto stated: “Spoke to EPA: is going to conclude that IARC is wrong. So is EFSA....pushed them to make sure atsd is aligned, said they would...they’re looking into getting a contact for me at cdc re bio monitoring.” MONGLY03293245 at *6-7. With respect to Mr. Jesudoss Rowland from the OPP, Mr. Jenkins commented: “Jess is doing a nice job at EPA[.]” Mr. Jenkins’ colleague at Monsanto, Ms. Jennifer Listello, queried whether “there [is] anyone we can get to in EPA?” *Id.* at *3. Mr. Jenkins also asked Ms. Mary Manibusan (formerly of the EPA and a colleague of both Mr. Rowland and Mr. Housenger): “do you know folks at ATSDR in HHS?” Ms. Manibusan responds: “Yes. Where specifically...on Tox profiles?” After Mr. Jenkins confirms, Ms. Manibusan responds: “I know lots of people. You can count o[n] me.” Mr. Jenkins informs her that: “we’re trying to do everything we can to keep from having a domestic IARC occur w this group. may need your help... I’ll share some info, you tell me what you think we might be able to do, who you may know, etc ok?” to which Ms. Manibusan agrees. *Id.* at *5. In communicating with another Monsanto colleague, Mr. Jenkins wrote: “I think we need to talk about a political level EPA strategy and then try to build a consensus plan...on several fronts: glyphosate...we’re not in good shape and we need to make a plan[.]” *Id.* at *6.

In another series of communications between Monsanto and Mr. Housenger from the OPP, Mr. Housenger reported that he has spoken to individuals at the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), one of whom, the branch chief, Henry Abadin,

“ended up saying that they would put glyphosate on hold holding the OPP risk assessment.” MONGLY02060344 at 2. When Mr. Jenkins forwarded this communication from Mr. Housenger to a fellow Monsanto colleague, Dr. William Heydens, Dr. Heydens responded with: “...at least they know they are being watched, and hopefully that keeps them from doing anything too stupid...” *Id.* at 1.

Moreover, Mr. James Nyangulu from Monsanto told Dr. Heydens that Mr. Nyangulu had “reached out to Jess Rowland this morning. He is willing to talk tomorrow, however he has back to back meetings from 9:30 till 11:30 am. He has given me his cell phone number for us to text him once we know what time we would like to meet him. He wanted to check with the Product Manager (PM) for MON102100 (not a good thing.... PM likely to deny the meeting). I discouraged him and hopefully he won’t check with the PM.” MONGLY02358772 at *1.

These documents also suggest that the collusion between Monsanto and EPA officials extended to Monsanto being able to use this relationship as leverage to effect decisions by other regulatory agencies, as demonstrated by the fact that “ATSDR Director and Branch Chief have promised Jack Housenger (Director of the US Office of Pesticide Programs) to put their report ‘on hold’ until after EPA releases its preliminary risk assessment (PRA) for glyphosate... [m]akes me very nervous, but I asked Jack whether or not he was worried about ATSDR coming out with something different and he said he wasn’t and I think he was being genuine.” MONGLY03064695 at *1, 2. In October 2015, Mr. Housenger reported to Monsanto that “We met with cdc about a month ago...[t]hey are waiting for our glyphosate RA. And they agreed to share what they do.” MONGLY03878138 a *1.

We hope that the OIG will be better informed in proceeding with its investigation as a result of having access to such documents. If you have any questions, I would happy to speak with you. Please be advised that, in furtherance of true transparency, I have copied Monsanto’s attorney, Joe Hollingsworth, on this letter.

Sincerely,

By: 

R. Brent Wisner, Esq.
Michael L. Baum, Esq.
Pedram Esfandiary, Esq.

Encls.
CC without enclosure: Joe Hollingsworth