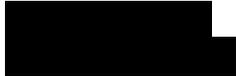




Pieris Pharmaceuticals, Inc.

Ahmed Mousa
Vice President & General Counsel
255 State Street, 9th Floor
Boston, MA 02109



www.pieris.com

July 11, 2019

Ms. Vanessa Countryman
Secretary
Securities and Exchange Commission
100 F Street NE
Washington, DC 20549-0609

Re: File No. S7-06-19: Amendments to the Accelerated Filer and Large Accelerated Filer Definitions

Dear Ms. Countryman:

On behalf of Pieris Pharmaceuticals, Inc. we are pleased to support the SEC's proposed rule to amend the definitions of "accelerated" and "large accelerated" filers. Pieris is a clinical stage biopharmaceutical company advancing a new wave of drug discoveries to address respiratory, cancer and other serious diseases with high unmet medical need. Our company went public in 2014 as an emerging growth company (EGC), which enabled us to access public capital markets earlier in our growth cycle due to regulatory relief provisions provided by the JOBS Act of 2012.

Both the ability to access public capital markets and the regulatory relief afforded EGCs enabled us to invest significantly in research and development to advance our preclinical and clinical pipeline and make potential breakthrough drug discoveries in the treatment of respiratory diseases and cancer. For instance, in 2018, we invested over \$40 million in research and development, alone, and since 2014, we have invested nearly \$100 million in research and development efforts. We commend the SEC for pursuing thoughtful and targeted regulatory relief—as indicated by the proposed rule—to enable companies like ours to continue to invest heavily in generating long-term value for our shareholders and patients, alike.

If the proposed rule is implemented in its current form, Pieris and other small public companies will benefit from relief from Sarbanes-Oxley (SOX) 404(b), the auditor's attestation of internal controls over financial reporting, until the company exceeds the \$100 million annual revenue cap and \$700 million in public float. Pieris specifically estimates that the first year of compliance with SOX 404(b)'s requirements related to the auditor's attestation of internal controls over financial reporting will cost us an additional approximately \$1.5 million that could have otherwise been allocated to research and development efforts. The certainty and predictability provided by the proposed rule will enable small public companies like ours to prioritize investments in factors that actually determine success or failure in the biotechnology industry, provide value to our shareholders and

advance our mission to treat patients in our therapeutic areas of focus. This includes investments in the science and technology underpinning our company’s potential—the Anticalin platform technology—as well as expanding our preclinical and clinical pipeline to treat new and broader diseases and patient populations. We will also benefit in the increased ability to invest in the design and execution of clinical trials that enhance our opportunity to garner approval from the Food and Drug Administration, among others, for our oncology and respiratory drug candidates.

We take seriously the need to have appropriate controls and believe that the framework outside of SOX 404(b)’s requirements regarding auditor’s attestation of internal controls over financial reporting are suitable for small, development-stage biotechnology companies like Pieris. While well-intentioned, SOX 404(b) has harmed small public companies because of its disproportionate expense, which diverts capital away from research and development, and the evidence¹ and our experience that it is not material for or important to our investors. We strongly believe that this proposed rule will benefit small public companies and their investors by freeing up more capital to hire talent, invest further in research and development, and expand our clinical pipeline to improve our ability to innovate in developing new drugs to treat the nation’s most intractable health problems. For these reasons, the SEC’s proposal to expand relief from SOX 404(b) for small public companies is a welcome step forward to making our public capital markets more accessible and attractive to small companies.

We commend the SEC’s efforts to ease the regulatory burdens facing small companies under the proposed rule.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ahmed S Mousa". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ahmed Mousa

¹ Study by Profs. Craig Lewis and Joshua T. White of Vanderbilt University, “Science or Compliance: Will Section 404(b) Compliance Impede Innovation by Emerging Growth Companies in the Biotech Industry?” February 2019, https://www.bio.org/sites/default/files/BIO_EGC_White_Paper_02_11_2019_FINAL.pdf.