



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

THE ADMINISTRATOR

DEC 22 2000

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Peer Review Handbook - 2nd Edition

TO: Assistant Administrators
Regional Administrators
General Counsel
Chief Financial Officer
Inspector General
Associate Administrators

We are very pleased to present the newly revised edition of the EPA's *Peer Review Handbook* for use within the Agency. The Handbook builds on an active tradition of peer review at EPA which encompasses the work of the Agency's Science Advisory Board and the other federal advisory committees as well as numerous peer reviews sponsored throughout EPA's programs, regions and laboratories. We believe the 2nd Edition will continue to provide necessary and useful guidance to EPA staff and managers, contribute to the Agency's goal of Sound Science, and enhance the quality and credibility of Agency decisions.

The 2nd Edition reflects the Agency's accumulation of experience as our long-standing commitment to peer review matures and grows. In particular, the revised Handbook addresses recommendations and comments received since the original Handbook was issued in 1998. We are gratified that many EPA staff and outside parties with an interest in peer review greeted publication of the 1st Edition as an excellent product. At the same time, we appreciate the thoughtful recommendations for enhancements that came from many sources, including the EPA's Science Advisory Board, EPA's Office of Inspector General, the National Research Council, and many EPA staff involved with peer review.

As Administrator and Deputy Administrator we are ultimately responsible for all peer review at the Agency. We remind you that as the main decision makers in your organizations you must ensure that proper peer review procedures are followed for your major scientific and technical work products. Accountability by the Agency's decision makers is paramount in ensuring that EPA decisions are fully supported by sound and credible science.

The revised Handbook is still written in a plain English, question-and-answer format to provide easy, user-friendly guidance for conducting peer reviews. We expect that the Handbook will continue to be an invaluable reference for you and your staff as you reaffirm EPA's strong commitment to peer review and to the quality of the scientific and technical products that underlie the Agency's decisions.

/s/
Carol M. Browner
Administrator

/s/
W. Michael McCabe
Deputy Administrator

Attachment