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August 16, 2005

Mr. E. Timothy Oppelt
Acting Assistant Administrator
Office of Research and Development
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Washington, DC 20460

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Dr. William Farland
Acting Assistant Administrator for Science
Office of Research and Development
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Mr. Oppelt and Dr. Farland:

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At a public meeting in September 2004, the Executive Committee of the Board of Scientific Counselors (BOSC), agreed to form a subcommittee to review the Office of Research and Development's (ORD) Ecological Research Program (ERP). The objectives of the review were to evaluate: (1) program relevance and quality, (2) program design and implementation, (3) progress achieved towards meeting long-term goals (LTGs), (4) stakeholder involvement and the degree to which research is consistent with needs articulated at regional and local levels, and (5) the degree to which research "outputs" are being used by stakeholders.

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A seven member BOSC subcommittee, called the Ecological Research Subcommittee, was formulated and composed of representatives from academia, industry, and government. Dr. Michael Clegg from the University of California-Irvine, a member of the BOSC Executive Committee, served as the Chair of the Subcommittee.

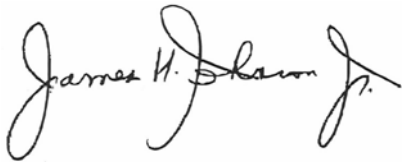
The ERP is organized into three LTGs and the Subcommittee's report provides an analysis of the program in the context of each of the LTGs. The report describes the ERP in holistic terms and provides specific conclusions and recommendations to improve the program's effectiveness and impacts. As described in the report, the review team concluded that results of the program's research are relevant and of direct use to states and tribes in protecting and restoring ecological resources. There is a need, however, for improved integration among the three LTGs, collaboration between EPA scientists and scientists outside the Agency, and processes to facilitate communication between the ERP and its stakeholders, as well as a formal process for assessment. The details of these and other conclusions and recommendations are contained in the report.

**U.S. EPA
Board of
Scientific
Counselors**

It is my pleasure to transmit this report to you on behalf of the BOSC Executive Committee and Ecological Research Program Subcommittee. We hope that the advice provided in the report will assist ORD in improving its science, explaining the significance of its research, and expanding the use of its products by clients inside and outside of EPA.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if there are questions regarding the report. The BOSC looks forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James H. Johnson, Jr." The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

James H. Johnson, Jr.
Chair