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February 14, 2006

Dr. George Gray
Assistant Administrator for Research and Development
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Office of Research and Development
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460

Subject: BOSC Review of the ORD Management Multi-Year Plan

Dear Dr. Gray:

At the June 2005 meeting of the Board of Scientific Counselors (BOSC), Acting Assistant Administrator Timothy Oppelt requested a review of the Office of Research and Development (ORD) Management Multi-Year Plan (MMYP) dated FY 2006. A working group of the BOSC reviewed the document and presented their comments to the Executive Committee of the BOSC at the September 2006 meeting. The comments communicated in this letter report on the review of the MMYP reflect the consensus of the Executive Committee.

ORD's Management Council developed the ORD MMYP to define a new way of thinking about administrative activities and services in ORD. The MMYP delineates the following strategic goals:

1. Provide exceptional administrative services.
2. Attract, develop and retain a talented and diverse workforce.
3. Evaluate and communicate ORD's programs effectively.

One performance criterion is identified, i.e., ORD is ranked in the top one hundred sub-agencies in "The Best Places to Work in the Federal Government."

"The Best Places to Work in the Federal Government" ranking uses responses to the Office of Personnel Management's bi-annual Human Capital Survey to develop scores for 10 drivers of organizational climate. Although it is a laudable goal to make ORD a great place to work, this should not be the only measure of success. Measures of success should relate directly to the three management initiatives listed in the MMYP. These measures should be sufficiently detailed to allow progress in reaching each goal to be tracked.

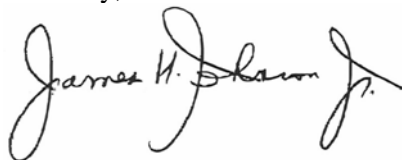
With regard to the specific Strategic Goals, it is not apparent how some of the activities delineated under Strategic Goal 1 will lead to the achievement of the Goal. The maintenance of a reputation (see Activities 1.2 and 1.3) does not necessarily lead to a

more effective, efficient, and safe delivery of services. Not only should the reputation be increased but the actual service delivery should be improved and the improvement should be measurable.

Lastly, it appears that the Management Council, a cross sub-agency group, has very little authority or budget for implementation of the MMYP. Therefore, it must depend on the goodwill of ORD's Executive Council, Science Council, and the National Program Directors for implementation of the activities identified in the MMYP. Normally, such implementation models lead to a variety of implementation strategies and effectiveness. ORD should consider providing the Management Council with authority and resources for implementation of systemic changes that will propel ORD into the top 100.

The members of the BOSC were pleased to have the opportunity to review the MMYP and applaud ORD in its efforts to improve the management and administrative serves in ORD. The BOSC is available to provide further information on this report should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "James H. Johnson, Jr." with a stylized flourish at the end.

James H. Johnson, Jr.
Chair, Board of Scientific Counselors