

HAPPENINGS at the SAB

...ensuring a solid technical basis for environmental protection

Volume 8 Number 1

January 2003

EDITOR'S NOTE

There is no Guest Editorial for the month of January, but we plan to continue with this feature in future issues. Keep in mind, we look to you, our readers of Happenings, to assist us in finding potential guest editors each month. Our aim is to make our newsletter as informative and attractive as possible for our readership. And for the witty and wise, we are also accepting bon mots. To do this, we need to hear from you. So please send all potential Guest Editorial submissions, bon mots and ideas about what you would like to see in Happenings to me, Vickie Richardson, at richardson.vickie@epa.gov. All submissions will be considered.

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TENTATIVE SAB MEETING CALENDAR FOR JANUARY & FEBRUARY

Several of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) meetings noted below have been announced in the Federal Register (FR), together with additional background information. Readers can automatically receive e-mailed copies of FR Notices by subscribing to the SAB Listserver; see Section Updates below.

If a series of meetings is anticipated, the number of the meeting in the series is indicated in parentheses; e.g., "(#2)".

JANUARY



6 F

Committee:	Executive Committee's (EC) Subcommittee Contaminated Sediments Science Plan (CSSP)
Topic(s):	CSSP document
Purpose:	To review, revise, and approve the Panel's document for delivery to the SAB's EC.
Location:	Ariel Rios North, Room 6013, Teleconference
Chair:	<i>Dr. Michael McFarland, Utah State University</i>
DFO:	<i>Mr. Lawrence Martin</i>
Email:	martin.lawrence@epa.gov

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14-15

Committee: Executive Committee (EC)
Topic(s): Review Meeting
Purpose: To review the Multi-Agency Radiological Lab Analytic Protocols (MARLAP), and the Long-Term Enhanced Surface Water Treatment Rule (LTESWTR) Proposal and Stage II Disinfection/Disinfectant By-Product (DBP) Rule Proposal.
Location: J.W. Marriott Hotel, Washington, DC
Chair: *Dr. William Glaze, University of North Carolina*
DFO: *Mr. A. Robert Flaak*
Email: flaak.robert@epa.gov

23 F

Committee: Research Strategies Advisory Committee (RSAC)
Topic(s): EPA's Science and Technology Budget Request for 2004
Purpose: (i) To discuss the charge and background materials provided to the Panel; (ii) To receive presentations from EPA representatives on the background materials; (iii) To receive public comments if any are offered; (iv) To ask questions on the charge and the background materials; (v) To make and discuss Panel assignments for the review; (vi) To clarify specific points of interest raised by the Panelists in preparation for the face-to-face meeting to be held on February 24-25, 2003; and (vii) To identify additional information or other Panel needs.
Location: Ariel Rios North, Room 6013, Teleconference
Chair: *Dr. Genevieve Matanoski, John Hopkins University*
DFO: *Mr. Thomas Miller*
Email: miller.tom@epa.gov

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24 F

Committee: Research Strategies Advisory Committee (RSAC)
Topic(s): EPA's Science and Technology (S&T) Budget Request for 2004
Purpose: To conclude Panel preparations for its review of the EPA S&T Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2004.
Location: Ariel Rios North, Room 6013, Teleconference
Chair: *Dr. Genevieve Matanoski, John Hopkins University*
DFO: *Mr. Thomas Miller*
Email: miller.tom@epa.gov

FEBRUARY



6 F

Committee: Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee (CASAC)
Topic(s): Project Work Plan for Revised Air Quality Criteria for Ozone and Related Photochemical Oxidants
Purpose: To evaluate and assess the latest scientific knowledge useful in indicating the kind and extent of all identifiable effects on public health and welfare which may be expected from the presence of these pollutants in the ambient air.
Location: Ariel Rios North, Room 6013, Teleconference
Chair: *Dr. Philip Hopke, Clarkson University*
DFO: *Mr. Fred Butterfield*
Email: butterfield.fred@epa.gov

7 F

Committee: Executive Committee's (EC) Subcommittee Human Health Research Strategy (HHRS) Review Panel
Topic(s): HHRS document
Purpose: To review, revise, and approve draft report for delivery to the SAB's Executive Committee.
Location: Ariel Rios North, Room 6013, Teleconference
Chair: *Dr. James Klaunig, Indiana University*
DFO: *Dr. Suhair "Sue" Shallal*
Email: shallal.suhair@epa.gov

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13-14

Committee: Ecological Processes & Effects Committee (EPEC)
Topic(s): "Guidelines for Deriving Numerical National Water Quality Criteria for the Protection of Aquatic Organisms and Their Uses"
Purpose: (i) To conduct a consultation with the EPA's Office of Water on its plan to revise the above document; and (ii) To receive Agency briefing on ecological science priorities and to discuss potential future SAB studies.
Location: TBA
Chair: Dr. Virginia Dale, Oak Ridge National Laboratory
DFO: Mr. Lawrence Martin
Email: martin.lawrence@epa.gov

14 F

Committee: Executive Committee's (EC) Subcommittee Contaminated Sediments Science Plan (CSSP)
Topic(s): CSSP document
Purpose: To review, revise, and approve the Panel's document for delivery to the SAB's EC.
Location: Ariel Rios North, Room 6013, Teleconference
Chair: Dr. Michael McFarland, Utah State University
DFO: Mr. Lawrence Martin
Email: martin.lawrence@epa.gov

24-25

Committee: Research Strategies Advisory Committee (RSAC)
Topic(s): EPA's Science and Technology Budget Request for 2004
Purpose: To review the science and technology budget for the Agency.
Location: J.W. Marriott Hotel, Washington, DC
Chair: Dr. Genevieve Matanoski, John Hopkins University
DFO: Mr. Thomas Miller
Email: miller.tom@epa.gov

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25-27

Committee: Radiation Advisory Committee (RAC)
Topic(s): Multi-Agency Radiation Survey and Site Investigation Manual (MARSSIM)
Purpose: (i) To conduct a consultation on two supplements being developed for MARSSIM; (ii) To receive briefings and program updates from the Office of Radiation and Indoor Air projects; and (iii) To discuss possible self-initiated projects for the RAC or ad hoc panels in this and the following fiscal year.
Location: ICC East, Room 1117A
Chair: Dr. Janet Johnson, MFG, Inc.
DFO: Dr. K. Jack Kooyoomjian
Email: kooyoomjian.jack@epa.gov

COMMITTEE
ACTIVITIES
IN
DECEMBER



On December 4, the Executive Committee's (EC) Reorganization Sub-Committee (RSC) held a non-FACA face-to-face meeting to evaluate the current structure, organization and composition (*i.e.*, membership) of the SAB to ascertain whether improvements in these areas can enhance its ability to carry out its critical mission even more effectively and efficiently. To date, a series of consultation meetings have been held with internal EPA staff, as well as with key external stakeholders and interested members of the general public, in order to solicit their input on prospective SAB reorganization and structural changes. Additional internal and external consultation meetings will be held once these draft options are finalized, which will be followed by a formal public comment period after a draft proposal is approved by the SAB Executive Committee.

The Reorganization Sub-Committee's goal is for the Board to present an approved final recommendation for the EPA Science Advisory Board's reorganization to the EPA Administrator by July 2003, with implementation to begin in FY 2004.

A copy of the summary and minutes from this public session can be found on the SAB Website at:

<http://www.epa.gov/sab/03minute.htm>. For further information on the activities of the SAB Executive Committee Reorganization Sub-Committee, please contact Mr. Fred Butterfield, RSC Designated Federal Officer, at telephone/voice mail: (202) 564-4561; or via e-mail at: butterfield.fred@epa.gov.

On December 5, the Executive Committee met via public teleconference and approved the following draft reports: a) Recommendations on the FY2001 Scientific and Technological Achievement Awards (STAA) Award Nominations: An SAB Report; and b) Affordability Criteria for Small Drinking Water Systems: An EPA Science Advisory Board

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Report. After completing minor edits, both reports were forwarded to the Administrator. The appendix containing the actual award nominations from the STAA report is embargoed from public release until January 31st in order to give the Agency sufficient time to process the awards and notify the recipients. The appendix will be posted on the SAB website on February 3.

STATUS OF FORMATION OF SAB PANELS

The Board has developed a revised Panel Formation process for the recruitment of *ad-hoc* review panels. For the latest detailed information, please visit our website, www.epa.gov/sab/panels/paneltopics.html.

SAB REPORTS IN PROGRESS



a PROJECTS DUE FOR THE MARCH 5 TELECONFERENCE

EC Subcommittee

- 1) Contaminated Sediments Science Plan

RSAC

- 2) S&T Budget Review

b PROJECTS DUE FOR A LATER EC MEETING

EEC

- 1) Risk Reduction Options Report

EHC

- 2) Human Health Research Strategy Review

EC

- 3) Cross Cutting Risk Assessment Issues

c PROJECTS THAT DO NOT REQUIRE EC APPROVAL (CASAC & COUNCIL)

There are none at this time.

d PROJECTS THAT HAVE RECEIVED EC APPROVAL AND AWAIT COMPLETION

DWC

- 1) Long Term Enhanced Surface Water Treatment Rule Proposal and Stage II Disinfection/Disinfectant By-Product (DBP) Rule Proposal

RAC

- 2) Multi-Agency Radiological Lab Analytic Protocols

ABSTRACTS OF NEW REPORTS

Review of Draft Trichloroethylene Health Risk Assessment: Synthesis and Characterization: An SAB Report
EPA-SAB-EHC-03-002

A Panel of the U.S. EPA Science Advisory Board's Environmental Health Committee reviewed the Agency's draft human health assessment, "Trichloroethylene Health Risk Assessment: Synthesis and Characterization." It responded to Agency charge questions that touched on how the document addressed several important new areas in risk assessment: a) risk to children and other susceptible populations; b) cumulative risk; c) examination of multiple kinds of evidence including evidence about physiological and molecular modes of action; d) the assessment of the health risks associated with the many metabolites of TCE; e) the use of biologically-based modeling; f) the explicit recognition and acknowledgement of uncertainties in the risk analysis; and g) the consideration of multiple data sets from animal and human studies to derive cancer slope factors.

The Board commends the Agency for its groundbreaking work in this draft and advises the Agency to move ahead to revise and complete this important assessment.

The Board also cautions the Agency that the new areas explored involve considerable uncertainty. Progress in reducing these uncertainties will be an evolutionary process that will necessitate advancements in scientific research and analysis. The Board also notes that there is a need for Agency-wide guidance in many of the areas explored in the draft assessment. The Agency should develop consistent policies across program areas on protection of children and other vulnerable populations, cumulative risk, and aggregate risk. Because the draft assessment breaks ground in several areas and sets important precedents, there is also a need to strengthen the rigor of the discussion in the revised assessment so

that the basis for all derived values is transparent and clearly supported by the available data. The Board identifies five key substantive areas for the Agency to address and also ways to revise the document to strengthen and provide confidence in the Agency's assessment.

Recommendations on the FY2001 Scientific and Technological Achievement Awards (STAA) Award Nominations: An SAB Report EPA-SAB-EC-03-003

This report represents the conclusions and recommendations of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Science Advisory Board regarding the FY2001 EPA Scientific and Technological Achievement Awards (STAA) Program. The STAA Program is an Agency-wide competition to promote and recognize scientific and technological achievements by EPA employees, fostering a greater exposure of EPA research to the public. The Program was initiated in 1980 and is managed by the Office of Research and Development (ORD).

The Agency submitted for review 140 nominations from the first nine of the eleven award categories this year (Control Systems & Technology, Ecology & Ecosystem Risk Assessment & Ecosystem protection, Health Effects & Health Risk Assessment, Monitoring & Measurement Methods, Transport & Fate, Review Articles, Risk Management and Policy Formulation, Integrated Risk Management, Social Sciences, Environmental Trends for Drivers of Future Risk, and Environmental Education). Of these, the Subcommittee recommended 37 nominations (26 percent of the nominations) for awards, and also recommended that 39 additional nominations be

recognized with Honorable Mention. The authors whose papers were recommended for awards this year represent the Office of Policy, Economics, and Innovation (OPEI), and 11 research laboratories and centers within the Office of Research and Development

The Subcommittee encouraged the Agency to continue support for the STAA program as a mechanism for recognizing and promoting high quality research in support of the Agency's mission. The Subcommittee also strongly encouraged that EPA broadly acknowledge the results of the award competition.

Affordability Criteria for Small Drinking Water Systems: An EPA Science Advisory Board Report EPA-SAB-EEAC-03-004

This report represents the conclusions and recommendations of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Science Advisory Board regarding the EPA affordability criteria which determines whether variances shall be available to small systems as they implement maximum contaminant level regulations under the Safe Drinking Water Act. The Agency asked the SAB for advice on: 1) EPA's basic approach to determining affordability for small systems (i.e., comparing average compliance costs with an expenditure margin), 2) components of the affordability determination method (i.e., use of median household income, alternatives to the 2.5% affordability threshold, calculation of the expenditure baseline), 3) the application, focus and/or definition of affordability (i.e., the use of separate national level affordability criteria for ground water vs. surface water systems; the need for making affordable technology determinations on a regional rather than a

national basis), and 4) whether financial assistance should be considered in EPA's national level affordability criteria.

The report presents the SAB's findings and recommendations on the Agency's charge questions. The report notes that Agency's basic approach is justified on the basis of equity and efficiency considerations, as well as considerations of administrative practicality. The SAB also addressed limitations of the basic approach and suggested EPA modify it where appropriate and possible. They encouraged the Agency to consider options of system consolidation when analyzing the nature and duration of any standards relaxation and noted that the use of a national trigger as a screening device suggests the adoption of a fairly low affordability threshold. The SAB encouraged EPA to develop clear and formal guidelines about when variances should be granted at the local level, and to conduct research into possible mechanisms for achieving greater equity in distribution of water costs to individuals. The report carries additional recommendations.

Underground Storage Tanks (UST) Cleanup and Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) Subtitle C Program Benefits, Costs, and Impacts Assessments: An EPA Science Advisory Board Advisory EPA-SAB-EC-ADV-03-001

The Underground Storage Tanks (UST) Cleanup and Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) Subtitle C Program Benefits, Costs and Impacts Review Panel (UST/RCRA BCI Review Panel, or "the Panel") provided advice on four charge questions relating to the planning of economic assessments of the UST Cleanup and

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RCRA Subtitle C Programs as described in two Agency draft reports. The Panel focused on providing advice pertaining to study design, and advice pertaining to evaluation of a range of methodological options. The Panel commented on the relative advantages, disadvantages and data requirements for each option, as well as possible alternative methods or modifications of methods presented in the two Agency draft documents to make informed decisions. The Panel also assessed whether the methods are consistent with EPA's *Guidelines for Preparing Economic Analyses*.

The Panel critiqued the proposed attributes matrix which is a common element of each Agency draft document, and noted that the proposed attributes matrix creates potential problems by loading too many extra considerations onto the conceptual framework provided by EPA's *Guidelines for Preparing Economic Analyses*, and by introducing distinctions that are not helpful to the analysis.

The Panel offered advice pertaining to the UST Cleanup and RCRA Subtitle C Program in terms of human health benefits, ecological benefits, indicators, avoided costs, the property value approach, as well as alternative approaches. Other topics touched upon dealt with distributional impacts, including environmental justice, intragenerational impacts, economic impacts, risk tradeoffs and intergenerational equity.

(1) SAB Website is within the EPA Home Page. You are invited to visit the SAB Website at URL: <http://www.epa.gov/sab>

The site offers such features as:

- (a) Full-text reports for FY1994-FY2003,
- (b) Background information about the structure, function, and membership of the SAB,
- (c) A calendar of future SAB meetings,
- (d) Recent issues of HAPPENINGS, and
- (e) Draft/final agendas of upcoming meetings and draft/final minutes of past meetings.

(2) SAB Listserver - By subscribing to the free SAB Listserver, you will automatically receive copies of all Federal Register notices announcing SAB meetings, together with brief descriptions of the topics to be covered at the meetings. These notices will be e-mailed to you within 24-hours of their publication in the Federal Register.

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COMPUTER NEWS



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**2000 mockingbirds:
2 kilomockingbirds**