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**OMB Releases Revised Bulletin on Peer Review; Seeks Additional Public Comment**

As part of a continuing effort to enhance the quality and credibility of scientific information that is disseminated to the public, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) released today a revised draft of guidance to agencies and requested additional public comment on the appropriate use of peer review. Peer review is a highly-regarded quality-assurance measure in the scientific community that promotes independent review and critique by qualified experts. The Peer Review Bulletin establishes minimum standards for when peer review is required and how intensive the peer review should be for different information products.

“Because of the importance of peer review to sound science, and to ensure that all voices are heard, we are both revising our draft Bulletin and requesting additional comment on it,” said Dr. John D. Graham, Administrator of OMB’s Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs.

OMB issued the Bulletin in draft form on September 15, 2003. OMB received 187 public comments, listened to discussion at an open workshop convened by the National Academy of Sciences, and undertook interagency review of the draft Bulletin. As a result of this input, the Bulletin now:

- provides in the preamble a more extensive discussion of why government-wide peer review guidance is needed;
- provides more discretion to federal agencies in determining what type of peer review mechanism is appropriate for specific information products;
- provides exemptions for time-sensitive medical, public health and safety information and other compelling circumstances;
- indicates that the guidance does not create any new rights for litigation against federal agencies;
- defines a more transparent process for public participation in peer review planning; and
- requires the most rigorous form of peer review only for highly influential scientific assessments.

A 30-day public comment period has been provided for the revised draft. The Bulletin will not take effect until later this year, after OMB receives additional public comments and makes any further revisions that are necessary.

The Peer Review Bulletin was developed pursuant to the Information Quality Law, which Congress passed in 2000 and which instructs OMB and federal agencies to take steps to improve the quality of information before it is disseminated.

The revised Bulletin, including OMB's response-to-comment document, are available on OMB's web site at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/inforeg/infopoltech.html#iq>.

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