



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

OFFICE OF  
THE ADMINISTRATOR

AUG 1 1989

**MEMORANDUM**

SUBJECT: The Risk Assessment Council

FROM: F. Henry Habicht II /s/  
Deputy Administrator

TO: Assistant Administrators  
General Counsel  
Regional Administrators

As you know, Jack Moore chaired the Risk Assessment Council from its creation by Lee Thomas in 1986 until his recent departure from the Agency. He and the other members of the Council are to be commended for their accomplishments in assuring the credibility and consistency of the EPA risk assessment process.

Since joining EPA, Bill Reilly and I have stated our belief that risk reduction should be the foundation of our decisions on environmental goals and of the individual actions which we take to implement those goals. The role of the Risk Assessment Council in overseeing all aspects of the Agency's risk assessment process is key to our success in assuring ourselves and the public that our decisions are based on sound scientific principles. Thus, I have chosen to chair the Council as a priority activity and to reexamine its objectives, agenda and membership.

I have sought the views of Jack Moore, members of the Council and others on the objectives, membership, and role of the Council and, as a result have some thoughts about the future goals of the Risk Assessment Council which I would like to share with you. I believe that the Council should continue to establish and implement general principles which govern how EPA conducts, uses and explains risk assessments. Thus, in addition to issuing general policy guidance and working through the Risk Assessment Forum to establish specific guidelines, the Council will be involved in quality assurance projects and will resolve disputes regarding significant risk assessment and science issues which arise in the context of specific regulatory actions. The Council will also coordinate our risk assessment policies with those of other agencies and external groups. I will also ask the Council to work on a project which I personally believe is very important - developing better methods for explaining to the lay public what our risk assessments mean and for communicating the assumptions and uncertainties involved in estimating risk. A revised Charter for the Risk Assessment Council is attached for your information. *[note: this old charter is not attached for this web site version]*

Council membership will continue to reflect the scientific excellence and expertise of the Agency. However, in order to foster the full integration of risk assessment into our programmatic decisions, it is also critical that senior program managers be actively involved in the work of the Council. To that end, I am expanding the size of the Council from 15 to 21 members in order to

assure that all programs are adequately represented. A list of those invited to become members is attached.

I will be counting on the members of the Council to work closely with me to resolve many important issues. I know I can count on each of you to lend your full support to all Council members, and particularly to those from within your organizations, to enable them to contribute to the Agency's efforts in this critical area.