



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

THE ADMINISTRATOR

May 15, 1997

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Use of Probabilistic Techniques (Including Monte Carlo Analysis) in Risk Assessment

TO: Assistant Administrators
General Counsel
Inspector General
Associate Administrators
Regional Administrators
Staff Office Directors

I am very pleased to forward to you the Science Policy Council endorsed Agency policy on the use of probabilistic analysis techniques (including Monte Carlo analysis) in risk assessments. This policy and associated documents have been developed to provide greater clarity on the use of probabilistic risk assessment techniques.

The use of probabilistic analysis techniques has been discussed in several EPA documents (e.g., the 1992 Exposure Assessment Guidelines and the 1995 Policy for Risk Characterization). However, a clear Agency position and guidance on the use of these techniques has been lacking. The policy explains that such probabilistic analysis techniques as Monte Carlo analysis, given adequate supporting data and credible assumptions, can be viable statistical tools for analyzing variability and uncertainty in risk assessments. In addition, the policy establishes a baseline set of conditions, related to good scientific practices, that are to be met before the Agency will accept a probabilistic analysis for further review and evaluation.

My thanks to the members of the Risk Assessment Forum/Science Policy Council Steering Committee workgroup who developed this policy statement and associated documents. This workgroup was comprised of representatives from various Programs and Regions (see attached list). I believe that the efforts of this group have resulted in a policy on probabilistic risk assessment that is sensitive to the needs and concerns of the Agency. Included in the policy is an implementation plan describing activities designed to assist the Regions and Programs with the use of probabilistic techniques. I encourage you to review this plan and to actively participate in the activities described therein.

/s/
Fred Hansen, Deputy Administrator

Attachments