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August 20, 2007

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

Dear Dr. Gray:

The Board of Scientific Counselors (BOSC) has completed a Mid-Cycle Review of ORD's Drinking Water Research Program (DWRP), focusing on Agency efforts undertaken following a BOSC program review in 2005. A BOSC Subcommittee comprised of five scientists who had participated in the 2005 review was charged with conducting the mid-cycle review. The DWRP Mid-Cycle Review consisted of a series of conference calls, a face-to-face meeting, and extensive review of program material provided by ORD. This effort was undertaken to provide general feedback on ORD's efforts since 2005 to enhance the DWRP, and to assist ORD in addressing issues and opportunities surrounding continued refinement in the DWRP scope. The Subcommittee members worked under a set of specific charge questions that guided them through the review. The BOSC Executive Committee has reviewed the report generated as a result of this effort and is pleased to transmit the report to ORD on behalf of the BOSC and the Drinking Water Mid-Cycle Review Subcommittee.

The Subcommittee focused its attention on the ORD response to the original BOSC review report, additional background information, a public conference call with the now permanent National Program Director, a DWRP progress update prepared by the DWRP Steering Committee, and ORD presentations at the face-to-face meeting held in May. The Drinking Water Mid-Cycle Subcommittee unanimously agreed that the DWRP exceeds expectations in meeting its goals, its science is more than competent and of high quality, its products are timely, and its milestones are largely met. The Mid-Cycle Subcommittee is very supportive and favorably impressed with the DWRP revisions of its Long-Term Goals (LTGs) and the formation of five Multi-Year Plan (MYP) thematic areas to direct research critical to the regulatory drivers of the LTGs.

The Subcommittee pointed out that the MYP has been delayed by more than 1 year and that it is still months away from a final embodiment. Whereas the MYP may not need to be in place until 2008, long-term strategic planning would benefit from having the MYP available sooner rather than later. Finalizing the MYP should be imperative and should be accomplished as soon as possible. Strategic planning should be pursued at several levels including: (1) research prioritization, (2) resource procurement and allocation in an era of declining budgets, (3) maintaining and promoting a leadership

agenda, and (4) integration of emerging environmental concerns such as climate change, sequestration, nanotechnology, and water reuse as they impinge on drinking water quantity, quality, and safety.

As an outcome of all reviews, the BOSC Subcommittee developed a limited number of recommendations for ORD to consider based on the material provided and the discussions organized as part of the mid-cycle review. The full text of the report provides the context and detail for these comments, additional specific programmatic recommendations, as well as the full scope of the Subcommittee's efforts and detailed comments.

It is my pleasure to transmit this report to you on behalf of the BOSC and the Drinking Water Mid-Cycle Review Subcommittee. The BOSC looks forward to discussing your response to this effort, as we have done with the program reviews. Please feel free to contact me if there are any questions regarding the report.

Sincerely,



James R. Clark
Chair