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July 11, 2006

Dr. George Gray
Assistant Administrator for Research and Development
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Office of Research and Development
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20406

Dear Dr. Gray:

In response to a request from the Office of Research and Development (ORD), the Executive Committee of the Board of Scientific Counselors (BOSC) consented to form a Subcommittee to review ORD's Water Quality Research Program. After consultation with EPA staff, the BOSC formed the seven-member Water Quality Program Review Subcommittee. The Subcommittee was composed of representatives from academia, nongovernment organizations, and government agencies. Dr. Herbert Windom of the Skidway Institute of Oceanography and Dr. Gary Saylor of the University of Tennessee (both members of the BOSC Executive Committee) served as Chair and Vice Chair, respectively, of the Subcommittee.

The review was structured to address a number of charge questions that relate to program relevance, quality, performance, leadership, and coordination/communication. The Subcommittee members communicated through an administrative conference call and two substantive conference calls open to the public. In addition, the Subcommittee met with the Water Quality Program Director, ORD staff, and Program clients and stakeholders on January 25-27, 2006 to conduct the program review and draft a report for BOSC Executive Committee approval.

The results of the review are anticipated to assist ORD in Program enhancement, comparative analysis with similar programs, intermediate mid-term investment decisions, Government Performance Results Act (GPRA) reporting, and response to the Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) process. The charge questions and the Subcommittee's responses are contained in the enclosed report. The recommendations included in the report are summarized below.

The overall impression of the Subcommittee is that the Water Quality Research Program is addressing its goals in an efficient and effective manner and as such

contributes significantly to the strategic goals of EPA. The Program is providing its major clients with needed technical support and products for environmental management. The Subcommittee also concluded that the Program is providing leadership in the area of water quality research focused on management and it has a diverse and competent staff that is commended for its work.

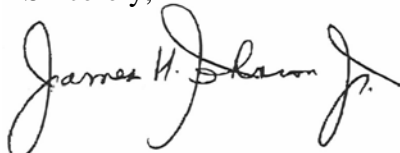
Although the Subcommittee has high regard for the Program, 25 specific recommendations were provided for consideration to maintain and enhance Program performance. The following six recommendations of the Subcommittee, however, were highlighted as the most important:

- ✧ A more transparent approach to prioritizing research.
- ✧ An annual accounting of Program outcomes.
- ✧ The exploratory part of the Science To Achieve Results (STAR) Program should be reinstated and made sustainable.
- ✧ The Program should continue to improve partnering and collaboration, particularly with states.
- ✧ The Multi-Year Plan needs considerable improvement if it is to better communicate the goals of the Program.

It is my pleasure to transmit this report to you on behalf of the BOSC Executive Committee and the Water Quality Research Program Subcommittee. We hope that the advice provided in the report will assist ORD in improving its science, explaining the significance of its research, and assisting clients inside and outside of EPA in utilizing its research products.

Please feel free to contact me if there are questions regarding the report. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James H. Johnson, Jr." The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

James H. Johnson, Jr.
Chair