



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

JUN 25 2003

OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR
SCIENCE POLICY COUNCIL

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Framework for Cumulative Risk Assessment

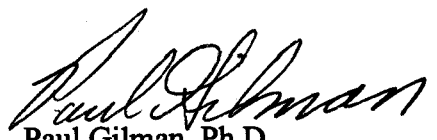
TO: Deputy Administrator
Assistant Administrators
Associate Administrators
Regional Administrators
General Counsel
Science Policy Council

I am very pleased to present EPA's *Framework for Cumulative Risk Assessment*. For most of our history, EPA assessed risks based on individual contaminants and often focused on one source, pathway or adverse effect. But in reality, the public is exposed to multiple contaminants from a variety of sources, and tools are needed to understand the resulting combined risks. The *Framework* represents an important milestone for EPA in expanding our focus from an individual chemical-based approach to a community or population-based approach for multiple stressors.

Development of the *Framework* is one of a series of Agency activities to better address combined risks from multiple stressors. Several EPA Programs and Regions have growing experience in conducting cumulative risk assessments, such as in evaluating cumulative risk for pesticides with a similar mode of action. In addition, the EPA Science Policy Council (SPC) has sponsored several efforts designed to lead to Agency-wide guidance on cumulative risk assessment. The first step in this effort was the SPC's 1997 guidance on planning and scoping for cumulative risk assessments. As a next step, a technical panel of the Risk Assessment Forum has now completed the *Framework*, which builds on prior efforts by identifying the basic elements and definitions for cumulative risk assessment. It also serves as the foundation for future efforts, such as evaluating past and emerging case studies in relation to the approach outlined in the document. I offer my thanks to this cross-Agency panel of experts for their efforts to further advance the thinking in this area.

Cumulative risk assessment is a major challenge for the Agency. This *Framework* moves us closer to achieving our goal of producing the most scientifically rigorous and realistic

evaluation of cumulative risk that the state-of-the-science can accommodate. The Administrator and I encourage Agency personnel to incorporate the thinking embodied in this document in the development of cumulative risk assessments that address risk management needs.



Paul Gilman, Ph.D.
EPA Science Advisor and
Chair, Science Policy Council

Attachment