



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

JAN 31 2006

THE ADMINISTRATOR

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Peer Review Program

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

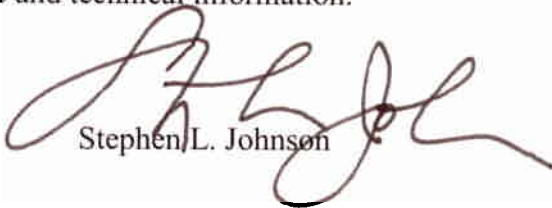
We have made tremendous strides in improving our peer review program at EPA since the Agency's Peer Review Policy was reaffirmed in 1994. Today I am updating the Peer Review Policy to emphasize the critical role that peer review plays in our efforts to ensure that EPA's decisions rest on sound, credible science and data (see attached policy statement).

Peer review at EPA takes several different forms, ranging from informal consultations with Agency colleagues who were not involved in developing the product to the formal, public processes of the Science Advisory Board (SAB) and the FIFRA Scientific Advisory Panel (SAP). In any form, peer review assists EPA's work by bringing independent expert experience and judgment to bear on issues before the Agency to the benefit of the final product.

In 1994 the Science Policy Council (SPC) and its Steering Committee were asked to undertake an initiative to ensure that EPA has a comprehensive Agency-wide program for implementing its Peer Review Policy. I commend the SPC for its diligence and success in meeting this objective. The SPC has made substantial improvements in the Peer Review Handbook, sponsored training of Agency managers and staff in peer review procedures, identified scientific and technical work products that merit peer review, and developed a publicly available data base of the peer review activities across the Agency. EPA has a strong and well-recognized peer review program as a direct result of these efforts.

In 2004 the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued a “Final Information Quality Bulletin for Peer Review” that contains provisions for peer review at all federal agencies. The OMB Bulletin applies to influential scientific information and highly influential scientific assessments. The SPC has updated the Agency’s Peer Review Handbook, in part to incorporate the provisions of the OMB Bulletin, and to reflect the experience gained from implementing the program over the last decade.

I ask that you continue to implement fully the provisions of our Peer Review Policy, and I expect the Science Policy Council to continue its role in overseeing and strengthening EPA’s peer review program. We must ensure that our decisions are based on the highest quality, peer-reviewed scientific and technical information.



Stephen L. Johnson

Attachment

cc: Science Policy Council
Science Policy Council Steering Committee