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July 23, 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 the Office of Research and Development's (ORD) Human Health Research Program (HHRP), focusing on Agency efforts to enhance the program following reviews conducted in 2005 by the BOSC and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). A team of four scientists participated in a series of conference calls, a face-to-face meeting, and a review of program material that started last fall. The purpose of the mid-cycle review was to provide general feedback on ORD's efforts to date, and to assist ORD in addressing issues and opportunities surrounding continued development of the Human Health Research Program scope. This was accomplished through a set of specific charge questions that guided the BOSC Subcommittee through its 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 HHRP Mid-Cycle Review Subcommittee.

The mid-cycle review focused on ORD's detailed documentation of changes in the HHRP, a revised Multi-Year Plan (MYP), changes in the scope and focus of research activities, and adaptations to budgetary and other programmatic changes. A rating of "Meets Expectations" was assessed for work completed to date. In the course of the review, it became apparent that there are many areas where ORD is continuing to work on challenging issues, develop new research plans, and review options for committing additional efforts to enhance various research activities. The Subcommittee agreed that the HHRP has great potential for significant impacts in the future based on these planned actions and new initiatives.

One of the key areas of discussion during the review centered on Long-Term Goal 4—Assessment of Risk Management Decisions. The

BOSC endorses refocusing LTG 4 as a means to tie advancements in human health research and implementation of risk management decisions to overall improvements in the health of the public. As this goal evolves to become a unifying theme for the HHRP, the objectives under this LTG can broaden to reflect the growing emphasis on evaluating and demonstrating the impact of ORD research on improving environmental health.

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 report provides the context and detail for these comments and additional specific programmatic recommendations, as well as the full scope of the review team's efforts and detailed comments.

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

Sincerely,



James R. Clark
Chair