Summary Minutes of the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) Science Advisory Board (SAB) Research Budget Work Group – March 8, 2012

Members of the SAB Research Budget Work Group: See Roster[1]

Date and Time: March 8, 2012, 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Eastern Time

Location: By telephone only

Purpose: To discuss the work group's draft report on the President's requested FY 2013 research budget for EPA.

SAB Participants:

Dr. Taylor Eighmy, Chair	Dr. Christine Moe
Dr. Terry Daniel	Dr. H. Keith Moo-Young
Dr. Costel Denson,	Dr. Eileen Murphy
Dr. Barbara Harper	Dr. James Opaluch
Dr. Kimberly Jones	Dr. Duncan Patten,
Dr. Nancy Kim	Dr. Stephen Roberts
Dr. Cecil Lue-Hing	Dr. Peter Thorne
Dr. James Mihelcic	Dr. Paige Tolbert

SAB Staff Office Participants

Dr. Angela Nugent, Designated Federal Officer (DFO)

Teleconference Summary:

The committee discussion at the teleconference covered the issues described in the agenda.[2]

Convene Teleconference

Dr. Angela Nugent, SAB DFO, convened the teleconference and welcomed the group. She noted that the teleconference continued discussion of matters discussed by the work group during the teleconferences held on March 1 and 2, 2012. The teleconference was announced in the Federal Register[3] and there had been no requests for oral public comments and no written comments provided to the work group.

Purpose and Review of the Agenda

Dr. Taylor Eighmy, the SAB work group Chair, reviewed the agenda. He thanked Agency personnel for providing information, thanked work group members for providing input for the draft report on a short timetable and thanked the DFO for integrating information into the draft report[4] for discussion. He asked members to focus on substantive issues during the teleconference and to send edits to the DFO by close of business on March 9, 2012.

Discussion of the draft report -Sections commenting on research programs

Air/Climate/Energy (ACE) Research Budget

Subgroup members noted that the draft text reflects information sent to the DFO. The major messages do come through: the budget supports increased research on the multi-pollutant approach, advanced monitoring, hydraulic fracturing, and developing climate change adaptation tools. Areas underfunded are climate change mitigation, full lifecycle analysis for energy options, research in economic, social and decision sciences, and more integration across ORD programs.

Safe and Sustainable Water Resources

Subgroup members noted that the draft text reflects information sent to the DFO but suggested that the text should be edited to indicate priorities more clearly. Water reuse should be more strongly identified as a priority. Dr. Mihelcic will draft text to be inserted near the top of page 10 suggesting that EPA should make it a priority to undertake a leadership role in research relating public health and water re-use, given a context where there are other national international players. He will clarify the need for funding

The water-energy nexus cuts across silos and research in this area should be highlighted.

Sustainable and Healthy Communities

Subgroup members made several suggestions for revising the text:

The draft text should characterize more clearly that this program resulted from the reorganization of many different ORD programs and administratively houses the STAR fellowship budget for all of ORD. The text should expand its discussion of Environmental Justice, a cross-ORD theme where the Sustainable and Healthy Communities Program has the lead. It might be appropriate to add text about the importance of research on children's health and the lack of clarity about progress in FY 2013 towards outputs slated for completion in later fiscal years.

Chemical Safety for Sustainability

Subgroup members noted that the draft text reflects information sent to the DFO. Workgroup members discussed the need to integrate draft text prepared by the Human Health Risk Assessment subgroup on nanotechnology and endocrine disrupting chemicals into the discussion of Chemical Safety for Sustainability research budget. The DFO committed to providing the draft text to both groups so that consensus text could be developed. The general agreement was to discuss the importance of emerging research in these areas should be evaluated to determine if significant results indicate the need for additional resources.

Human Health Risk Assessment

Subgroup members noted that the draft text reflects information sent to the DFO. They asked about references on partnerships sent to the DFO. The DFO explained that the references were

more relevant to the Chemical Safety for Sustainability write-up than the Human Health Risk Assessment component of the report. She committed to sending the references to both groups.

Homeland Security (HS)

Subgroup members asked for committee members to provide special comment on text related to resilient infrastructure (Page 21, line 11-18) and the references to social, behavioral, and decision science research (p. 22).

Economics and Decision Science

The subgroup noted that the major message comes through: that the FY 2013 funding is inadequate and not sufficient to advance the science, but it does represent an increase over immediate past years. There is a need to correct and clarify the table on page 23. It will also be appropriate to ensure that the SAB is characterizing the PACE survey and NCEE's history with it correctly.

Overarching issues

The work group discussed additions to/changes to the draft text. They suggested that the following changes be made:

- Text on research program integration - Page 4, around line 22: add discussion of the need to understand how integration is to be accomplished and how it is dealt with from a budget perspective. Although ORD's restructured programs are new, the SAB expects to see more explicit representation of how integration will be accomplished. Dr. Terry Daniel agreed to draft text for possible incorporation in the report.
- Several work group members requested that additional information about cross-program integration implementation be provided at the Board's July meeting (e.g., more indication of which programs are involved in cross-program efforts, which have the lead, and what are the budget implications)
- Add text on the importance of funding for environmental justice and children's health. Dr. Duncan Patten volunteered to provide draft text.
- Clarify that STAR fellowships are an efficient way to "move quickly into new areas and build capabilities for future research."
- Priorities to highlight as underfunded areas: Climate change mitigation, treatment of full-lifecycle analysis of energy options; water reuse and water energy nexus; funding for community-based interactions within the Sustainable and Health Community Program; Human Health Risk Assessment efforts to integrate outputs generated by the Chemical Safety for Sustainability program; resiliency component of the Homeland Security Program; protect the environment yet not be overly burdensome to the economy, market behavior, emissions abatement trading, and decision sciences.
- Allocation of resources across ORD programs. Page 3, lines 40-45. Revise text to discuss relative percentage of funding for ORD's six programs. Do not focus on the percentage for the Sustainable and healthy Communities program. Discuss the historical background for current resource allocations and note the need in future years to better understand the criteria for making budget choices and how responsibilities and expected outputs across programs compare.

- Page 4, lines 20-23. Do not single out individual research plans. Rather, note that research plans that had clear linkages between programmatic purpose, outputs, and budget activity were most useful.
- Add paragraph describing information needs for next year's budget review. Needs include
    - Milestones for multi-year outputs.
    - Annual updates of list of outputs and rationale for changes would help readers understand the programs and help readers connect the budget with the strategic research action plans. This would provide more of a "roadmap" for outputs.
    - Such information is needed to answer charge questions as framed. Information needs to be provided at the same level of resolution as the questions.
    - More consistency between ORD's briefing materials, the strategic research action plans, and the budget.

Points for Letter to the Administrator

The workgroup chair committed to providing a draft letter for work group members' review. Points to highlight in the letter include:

- Integration of social sciences across ORD programs
- Integration of programs is not transparent in budget review. Reiterate that integration of programs is key to a systems approach
- Support for hydraulic fracturing research
- Support for climate change mitigation research

Action items and next steps

Work group members will provide comments to the DFO by March 9, 2012. The DFO will circulate the draft Letter to the Administrator for comment to work group members.

The work group chair closed the meeting by expressing thanks to agency personnel for participating and providing information and thanked the work group members and DFO for their efforts.

The Designated Federal Officer adjourned the meeting at 12:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

/Signed/

Dr. Angela Nugent
SAB DFO

Certified as accurate:

/Signed/

Dr. Taylor Eighmy
Chair, SAB Committee on Science Integration for Decision Making

Attachment A: Members of the Public Who Indicated Participation on the March 2, 2012 Teleconference

Christopher Michael Clark, EPA

Dan Costa, EPA

Al Edwards

Becca Feeks, EPA

Jenny Hopkinson, Inside EPA

Stacey Katz, EPA

Rick Linthurst, EPA

Michael Loughran, EPA

Andy Miller, EPA

Nicholas Moustakas, Health Effects Institute

Regan Murray, EPA

Christine Muchanic, Special Situations/Height Analytics

Stacey Rabkin, EPA

Greg Sayles, EPA

Betsy Smith, EPA

Tim Watkins, EPA

Materials Cited

The following meeting materials are available on the SAB Web site, http://www.epa.gov/sab, at the page for the March 8. 2012 teleconference: http://yosemite.epa.gov/sab/sabproduct.nsf/a84bfee16cc358ad85256ccd006b0b4b/92f648db7b2c627785257966004ba935!OpenDocument&Date=2012-03-08

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[1] Roster of the SAB Research Budget Work Group
[2] Agenda
[3] Federal Register notice announcing the meeting (77 FR Vol 77 Number 27 Pages 6796)
[4] *Science Advisory Board Comments on the President's Requested FY 2013 Research Budget* (Draft report 03/06/12)