

## **Introduction**

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Deidre Duncan, and I am a Partner with the law firm of Hunton & Williams. I speak today on behalf of the Waters Advocacy Coalition or WAC. WAC is comprised of more than 30 public and private organizations that represent a large cross-section of the Nation's construction, housing, mining, agriculture, manufacturing, and energy sectors, all of which are vital to our economy and depend on the use and supply of our Nation's water resources.

The Coalition's members include among others: the American Farm Bureau Federation®, the American Forest & Paper Association, the American Petroleum Institute, the American Road and Transportation Builders Association, the Associated General Contractors of America, CropLife America, the Edison Electric Institute, the Fertilizer Institute, the International Council of Shopping Centers, the National Association of Home Builders, the National Association of Manufacturers, the National Association of REALTORS®, the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, the National Corn Growers Association, the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, the National Mining Association, the National Multi Housing Council, the National Pork Producers Council, the National Stone, Sand and Gravel Association, Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment, and the Western Business Roundtable.

I would like to make 4 comments today on behalf of WAC.

## **Comments**

First, it is our understanding that Science Advisory Board panel selection should include an opportunity for the public to nominate, review and comment on potential panel members. This is confirmed by information published on the SAB website entitled "FY12 Initiatives to Enhance Public Involvement in Advisory Activities" in which EPA reaffirmed the commitment to increase public involvement and transparency in the SAB process. It appears in this case, however, the panel was pre-selected without providing any public nomination opportunity. Will the public be able to have input on the panel members? And, if not, why did EPA skip over this important step?

Second, with respect to the makeup of the panel itself, we find it somewhat peculiar that while the charge for the panel is to advise EPA on developing a report on the value of water to the U.S. economy, the panel is short on experts with credentials in the area of economics. Many of the representatives and several of the “augmented” members are not economists, but engineers. WAC believes the public and EPA would have been better served had it followed long-standing SAB procedures of seeking the public's assistance in ascertaining experts with the right kind of expertise.

Third, and also of concern with respect to procedural matters, is the shortness of the time provided for the public to review the materials that are the subject of discussion today. Materials were posted at approximately 5pm, on the eve of the Thanksgiving holiday. The deadline for providing any written comment was the Tuesday following Thanksgiving, leaving the public little or no time to prepare for and evaluate the scope of the effort involved. We hope that in the future, materials will be provided in sufficient time in advance of calls/meetings for the public to provide adequate input to the process.

Fourth and finally, after briefly reviewing the materials provided, WAC members are even more concerned that the focus of the study appears to be industry sector specific. Yet, the augmented panel is woefully inadequate when it comes to having any particular expertise in any of the industries that were identified. As a Coalition representing almost all sectors of the economy, WAC requests that EPA look for more opportunities in this process for industry representation, input, and review.