

**Preliminary Comments from Members of the Chartered SAB on the SAB
Draft Report SAB Recommendations(08/13/2012 Draft) for EPA’s FY2012
Scientific and Technological Achievement Awards**

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Comments from lead reviewers

Comments from Dr. Costel Denson

General Comments. This report is superbly written. It is sharply focused and robust, and contains a set of recommendations that are easily understood and implemented. In addition to containing a set of award recommendations, the report contains a set of administrative recommendations, and these should serve to further elevate the overall quality of the individual awards.

1. Were the original charge questions adequately addressed?

The original charge was adequately addressed.

2. Are there any technical errors or omissions in the report or issues that are inadequately dealt with?

There were no technical errors or omissions in the report, and no issue was inadequately dealt with.

3. Is the report clear and logical?

Yes. The report is clearly and logically written.

4. Are the conclusions drawn or recommendations provided supported by the body of the report?

The conclusions and recommendations are well supported by the body of the report.

Comments from Dr. Taylor Eighmy

The draft letter to the administrator and report is a summary of the important deliberative process by the STAA Committee to recognize peer reviewed journal articles and book chapters by agency scientists and engineers. The process is one very important way for ORD to recognize excellence in scholarship, particularly in how the agency's research community contributes to the overall R&D mission of the U.S. EPA.

Overall Comments:

1. General Thoughts:

This is a very succinct draft letter to the administrator and draft report of the review process and outcomes for awarding the 2012 STAA awards. The committee chair, full committee and the DFO are to be applauded for their excellent work and efforts, particularly in bringing forward a draft report of high quality so soon after the completion of the review and deliberation process.

The report is very clear, very well written, and continues the important process of working closely with ORD to recommend helpful improvements to the process so that agency scientists can be fully recognized for their scholarly achievements and contributions to discovery.

I found this year's recommendations to ORD for process improvement to be very good—they look spot on and they really reflect a healthy maturation of the collaborative process between the STAA Committee and ORD.

It is also very encouraging to see how responsive ORD was to last year's recommendations and the agency is to be commended for their work with the STAA Committee.

2. Mapping the Report to the Summary and to the Letter to the Administrator:

I found that mapping was very evident between the letter and the committee report. The letter is appropriately brief, concise and clear. Though the recommendations for process improvement are not described in the letter, the letter more appropriately notes that they are to be found in the body of the report.

4. Report Organization:

The report is brief, well organized, and clear to follow.

Response to the Four Specific Questions:

1. Were the original charge questions to the Panel adequately addressed?

This really is not applicable given the nature of the STAA review. Based on prior year's

efforts, this letter and report are very responsive to the input that ORD needs as they work through the annual award process.

2. Are there any technical errors or omissions in the report or issues that are inadequately dealt with?

None.

3. Is the report clear and logical?

Yes, very much so.

4. Are the conclusions drawn or recommendations provided supported by the body of the report?

Yes, very much so.

Comments from other SAB Members

Comments from Dr. George Alexeeff

At the request of ORD, the Science Advisory Board annually makes recommendations to the Administrator concerning nominations for the Agency's Scientific and Technological Achievement Awards. These awards are established to recognize EPA employees who have made outstanding contributions in the advancement of science and technology through their research and development activities, as exhibited in publication of their results in peer-reviewed journals.

1. Were the original charge questions adequately addressed?

My understanding is that the charge question is basically to "to review EPA's nominated scientific papers and to make recommendations for awards." The draft report meets this charge.

2. Are there any technical errors or omissions in the report or issues that are inadequately dealt with in the Panel's report?

I did not identify any errors or omissions.

3. Is the Panel's draft report clear and logical?

Yes, the draft report is clear and logical.

4. Are the conclusions drawn or recommendations provided supported by the body of the Committee's report?

There is insufficient information to determine if the conclusions drawn are supported by the body of the report. However, the process undertaken by the committee is provided.

Comments from Dr. Joseph Arvai

General comments:

This is a fantastic program and I am highly supportive of it.

1) Were the charge questions to the committee adequately addressed?

Yes.

2) Are there any technical errors or omissions or issues that are not adequately dealt with in the draft report?

No.

3) Is the draft report clear and logical?

Yes.

4) Are the conclusions drawn or recommendations provided supported by the body of the draft report?

Yes.

Comments from Dr. Nancy Kim

The report was well done and the recommendations for improving the process looked good.

1) Were the charge questions to the committee adequately addressed?

Yes

2) Are there any technical errors or omissions or issues that are not adequately dealt with in the draft report?

No.

3) Is the draft report clear and logical?

Yes.

4) Are the conclusions drawn or recommendations provided supported by the body of the draft report?

Yes.

Comments from Dr. Cecil Lue-Hing

General comments

The Panel did a good job of reviewing the suite of candidate scientific papers nominated by EPA, and has made recommendations for the Awards.

Specific Comments

Letter to the Administrator

The letter to the Administrator is straightforward, it states the purpose of the review, and presents a summary of the Panel's recommendations for the awards. The Panel expresses its satisfaction with the high quality of the work products nominated, and the Agency's efforts to publically recognize the scientific endeavors of its professional workforce.

The Body of the Report

The report is very compact, and because of the nature of the review, the results are presented in a simple tabular format.

The Administrative Recommendations

The recommendations are appropriate, and are designed to improve the Awards Program.

Quality Review Questions

1 – Were the original charge questions to the Committee adequately addressed?

Yes.

2 – Are there any technical errors or omissions in the report or issues that are inadequately dealt with in the Panel's report?

None that I detected.

3 – Is the Panel's draft report clear and logical? and

Yes.

4 – Are the conclusions drawn or recommendations provided supported by the body of the Committee's report

Yes.

Comments from Dr. John Vena

The report looks fine. No comments.