

My name is Joshua Cohen and I am a Research Associate Professor of Medicine and Deputy Director of the Center for the Evaluation of Value and Risk in Health at Tufts Medical Center in Boston. I served on the 2006 NAS dioxin committee, although I am providing this statement on my own behalf.

Cited here is a letter I wrote with Professor George Gray (George Washington University) to the editor of the journal *Risk Analysis*.¹ We would like to emphasize that while EPA has substantially improved its explanation for the assumptions it has selected for its dioxin risk assessment, it is still crucial that the agency characterize the uncertainty associated with these choices. In the most optimistic case that EPA's choices are indeed the most scientifically defensible, each assumption still has the possibility of being incorrect. Because an analysis like EPA's rests on many assumptions, the likelihood that all its assumptions are correct is probably small.

As described in our letter to the editor, other analyses demonstrate the use of methods for the quantitative characterization of uncertainty. Because decision makers must understand the range of implications associated with available courses of action in order to improve public health, we hope the SAB will urge EPA to take practical steps to more completely and quantitatively characterize the uncertainty associated with its dioxin risk estimates.

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¹ Cohen JT and Gray GM. Letter to the Editor. *Risk Analysis* 30(10):1457-8.