

**Summary Minutes of the Homeland Security Advisory Committee (HSAC)
Public Meeting**

Friday, July 15, 2005

**SAB Conference Center
Woodies Building
1025 F St., N.W., Washington, DC**

- Panel Members: See Panel Roster – [Attachment A](#)
- Dates and Times: Friday, July 15, 2005, 8:30 AM – 4 PM
- Location: SAB Conference Center, Woodies Building, 1025 F Street, NW, Washington, DC
- Purpose: The purpose of this meeting was for EPA offices to brief the SAB Homeland Security Advisory Committee regarding EPA’s role in homeland security and the scope of the Agency’s research and activities.
- Attendees:
- Chair: Dr. Baruch Fischhoff
 - HSAC Members:
 - Dr. William Bellamy
 - Dr. Vicki Bier
 - Dr. Mary Durfee
 - Dr. David Ensor
 - Dr. Lynda Knobeloch
 - Dr. Paul Lioy
 - Dr. Lee McMullen
 - Dr. Royal Nadeau
 - Dr. Robert Pitt
 - Dr. Robert Snyder
 - Dr. Linda Stetzenbach
 - Dr. W. Kip Viscusi
 - Dr. Daniel Walsh
 - Dr. James Watson
 - Dr. Rae Zimmerman
 - EPA SAB Staff:
 - Mr. Richard Albores, Deputy Director for Management
 - Dr. Heidi Bethel, HSAC Designated Federal Officer (DFO)
 - Dr. Jack Kooyoomjian, DFO
 - Dr. Anthony Maciorowski, Associate Director for Science
 - Ms. Vivian Turner, DFO
 - Dr. Vanessa Vu, Director
 - Other EPA Staff:
 - Andy Avel, ORD, NHSRC
 - Lynn Bradley, OEI, QS
 - Eletha Brady-Roberts, ORD, NHSRC
 - Valerie Chan, ORD, OAA

Grace Cheng, OIA, MO
Mary E. Clark, OAR, ORIA
Cynthia Dougherty, OW, GWDW
Laura Flynn, AO, OHS
Joe Greenblot, AO, OCFO
Shari Grossarth, AO, OPEI
Alan Hais, ORD, NHSRC
Jonathan Herrmann, ORD, NHSRC
Peter Jutro, ORD, NHSRC
Mary Kruger, AO, OHS
Lisa Nanko, AO, OHS
Tim Oppelt, ORD, NHSRC
Janet Pawlukiewicz, OW, GWDW
Dan Schmelling, OW, GWDW
Irwin Silverstein, AAAS/ ORD, NHSRC
Connie Thoma, OEI, QS
Dana Tulis, OSWER, OEM
Jim Vinch, OPPTS, OPPT
Rosemary Workman, AO, OHS

Other Participants: William Clark, American Water Works Association
Lauren DiSano, Association of Public Health Laboratories
Dennis Grossman, Nature Serve
Paul Gruber, Booz Allen
Alex Karafilidis, Thermo Electron Corporation
Glenn Milstrey, New York State Department of
Environmental Conservation
Kevin Morley, American Water Works Association

Meeting Summary:

The discussion followed the issues and general timing as presented in the meeting agenda ([Attachment B](#)).

FRIDAY, JULY 15, 2005

Convene Meeting, Call Attendance, Introduction and Administration

Dr. Heidi Bethel, Designated Federal Officer (DFO) for the HSAC, opened the meeting and welcomed all attendees. She noted that the HSAC is a Federal advisory committee chartered under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) to provide advice and recommendations to the EPA Administrator. Consistent with FACA regulations, its deliberations are held as public meetings for which advance notice is given in the *Federal Register*. The DFO is present at all such meetings to assure compliance with FACA requirements. Meeting minutes were taken (by the DFO) for this face-to-face meeting. The minutes will be certified by the HSAC Chair and made available on the SAB Web site (<http://www.epa.gov/sab>). All Committee members have earlier submitted documentation with respect to possible financial conflicts-of-interest, which was reviewed by a SAB staff member prior to the meeting and found to be satisfactory.

Dr. Anthony Maciorowski, Associate Director for Science, Science Advisory Board Staff Office, welcomed the committee and thanked them for their participation.

Dr. Baruch Fischhoff, Chair of the HSAC, welcomed the committee and agency participants. The committee members introduced themselves and briefly described their backgrounds.

EPA Speakers and Presentations

Mr. Tim Oppelt, Acting Assistant Administrator, Office of Research and Development

Mr. Oppelt thanked the Committee members for serving on this SAB Committee. He is pleased with the dimensions and expertise of the group. The Committee's input will help to guide EPA's work on issues of homeland security.

Mr. Oppelt gave the Committee a brief history on the formation of the National Homeland Security Research (NHSRC) center at EPA. After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, he headed the NHSRC. At that time, the research center was set up as an interim establishment as there was uncertainty as to how long the EPA would be involved in homeland security. Since then, the NHSRC has become a permanent establishment at EPA. EPA's main roles in homeland security are emergency response, cleanup and decontamination of chemical and biological attacks and protection of water systems. EPA maintains working relationships with states, tribes and other federal agencies in order to coordinate efforts and resources allocated to homeland security. Mr. Oppelt stated that in his experience, the coordination between organizations has been remarkable.

Several committee members asked questions which spotlighted the cross-agency responsibilities for homeland security. For example several agencies have responsibility for air issues. One committee member asked why there is no committee member to represent contamination of food. Mr. Oppelt stated that many of these issues are systems problems which require systems solutions. For example, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) are the lead agencies for decontamination and disposal of contaminated food with EPA providing technical assistance to these agencies.

Ms. Mary U. Kruger, Director of the Office of Homeland Security

Ms. Kruger gave a presentation entitled: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: Partner in Protecting the Homeland ([Attachment C](#)). Her presentation gave a general overview of EPA's roles in homeland security activities and the specific Homeland Security Presidential Directives for which EPA has lead authority. She also gave a brief history on the formation of the Office of Homeland Security.

Following Ms. Kruger's presentation, committee members asked general questions about the types of advice that the SAB HSAC could provide to EPA. EPA staff stated that they need advice on conducting biological risk assessments. In addition, EPA needs to address ways to extend their current laboratory resources and capacities and obtain new resources (e.g. additional labs, standard laboratory methods and procedures, standard analytical procedures, research and development).

Committee members also asked questions about the priority of water security for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and EPA. EPA staff indicated that water does not rank high on a list of

homeland security priorities for DHS based on intelligence information. However, water security is a high priority for EPA.

Ms. Cynthia C. Dougherty, Director, Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water

Ms. Dougherty gave a presentation entitled: Water Security: An Overview of Progress to Date and Plans for the Future ([Attachment D](#)). Her presentation gave an overview of EPA's responsibilities with regard to water security. Her presentation also outlined EPA's Water Sentinel Pilot program.

One committee member asked what the vulnerability factors are for water systems and how these factors are prioritized. Ms. Dougherty stated that the vulnerability factors include physical and chemical threats, damage to physical infrastructure, loss of service and cyber attacks. Priorities are established through the intelligence data of the local FBI.

Another HSAC member asked if EPA was exclusively examining vulnerabilities of large water systems or if they were also looking at smaller systems. Ms. Dougherty stated that EPA is also responsible for smaller water systems which serve fewer than 3300 people.

A committee member stated EPA has typically evaluated low dose chronic exposures to chemicals and toxic agents. However, potential water contamination events by terrorists will most likely be high dose, acute exposures. This member questioned whether EPA's priority is low dose chronic exposures or acute exposures for contaminated water systems. EPA staff indicated that in terms of terrorist events, they are examining high dose acute exposures.

Ms. Dana Tulis, Deputy Director, Office of Emergency Management

Ms. Tulis gave a presentation entitled: EPA's Emergency Preparedness and Response Program (Power Point presentation attached to meeting agenda at HSAC web site: [Attachment E](#)). Her presentation outlined EPA's responsibilities with regard to emergency management, decontamination and cleanup, and laboratory capability and capacity. Ms. Tulis indicated that EPA's sampling methods need to be evaluated for quality assurance. Some needs that she identified included new Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and access to dilute standards for identification of contaminants. Ms. Tulis also stated that EPA is making strategic plans for how to deal with multiple terrorist incidents as occurred on September 11.

Mr. Andy Avel, Acting Director, National Homeland Security Research Center (NHSRC) and Mr. Peter Jutro, Deputy Director for Science and Policy, NHSRC

Mr. Avel gave a presentation entitled: EPA's National Homeland Security Research Center ([Attachment F](#)). The presentation focused on the organization and functions of the National Homeland Security Research Center. Mr. Peter Jutro, participated in discussions following the presentation.

Mr. Avel indicated that one area for potential advice of the SAB HSAC is on biological risk assessments.

Dr. Fischhoff, Chair of the HSAC, asked EPA staff to identify the decision makers in the assessment process for decontamination. EPA staff stated that the decision makers include a host of players including first responders, public citizens, EPA's Office of Water and others.

A committee member asked EPA to respond to a public comment submitted before the meeting which was critical of EPA's laboratory capacity and standards compared to the capacity of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). EPA staff stated that CDC's laboratories are well funded for counter-terrorism work and their program was robust even before September 11. EPA's does not have as much laboratory funding as CDC, but EPA strives to use their resources wisely.

Another committee member questioned why university based research groups were missing from the list of EPA's collaborators in the presentation. EPA staff indicated that collaborations do exist with universities and EPA is continuing to expand these relationships. One committee member stated that university research groups can help EPA to develop exposure scenarios and methods for detection of chemical and biological agents.

Public Comments

Mr. Kevin Morley, American Water Works Association (AWWA)

Mr. Morley commented that EPA's goals in terms of water security and water security research are not clearly defined and more focus needs to be put in this area. EPA also needs to effectively communicate information to the water sector and utilities. He listed many issues that need to be examined including but not limited to: the importance of drinking water in national security; the balance between prevention and detection of biological and chemical threats in response and recovery; rapid response and risk assessment issues; the public's view of water and water security; cost/benefit analyses of different decontamination strategies; balancing the safe drinking water act with security issues. Mr. Morley presented a host of issues which can also be found in his written public comments. Mr. Morley stated that AWWA is advocating more research in water security issues and effective communication by EPA and other federal agencies to the water sector.

Following Mr. Morley's presentation, one committee member asked if the interdependency of water systems and critical infrastructure has been evaluated. EPA staff stated that they have examined these interdependencies and a draft document should be coming out soon.

Several committee members followed up this presentation with a brief discussion of whether physical or chemical threats are more damaging to the water sector.

Lauren DiSano, Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL)

Ms. DiSano stated that APHL advances lab practices and policies in all 50 states and supports public health systems. In this capacity APHL believes that state laboratory preparedness for the identification of chemical warfare agents is lacking and that the Department of Defense (DOD) laboratories are the only laboratories which are equipped to analyze warfare agents. Ms. DiSano indicated that it is unclear how the critical task of analyzing these agents will be accomplished in various state laboratories. No chemical or procedural standards exist in the state laboratories. There is also a lack of dedicated resources at the federal level for environmental sampling with regard to terrorist agents.

Following the presentation, one panel member stated that more money should be spent on surveillance and prevention of attacks rather than on monitoring for chemical and biological warfare agents.

Discussion of Potential Topics for SAB Advice

Dr. Vanessa Vu, Director, Science Advisory Board Staff Office, thanked the committee for attending the meeting and for being willing to provide advice to the EPA Administrator and the various EPA program offices in the future.

Dr. Vu briefly described the process for the committee to provide advice to the Agency. The first step in this process is to solicit areas where advice is needed from the EPA program offices. Dr. Vu stated that there are three types of advice which may be provided by the committee: consultation, advisory, or peer review. During a consultation, the Agency is seeking immediate advice from the committee and there is no written report. An advisory activity is similar to a peer review for scientific publication but is less rigorous. A written product will be produced during an advisory activity. During a peer review activity, the committee thoroughly reviews a document written by the Agency and a report is written by the committee to provide feedback to the Agency.

Dr. Vu stated that this committee is a subcommittee of the chartered SAB. As a subcommittee, the chartered SAB approves all reports that are produced by this subcommittee. This subcommittee has the power to determine which projects are most important for them to review and has the opportunity to provide unsolicited advice and commentary to the Agency if desired.

Dr. Vu indicated that SAB committees generally convene meetings between 1 and 5 times per year either face-to-face or via teleconference. The number of yearly meetings of the HSAC will depend on the workload and on participation of the Agency and items presented to the committee for review. The SAB Staff Office recognizes that due to the variety of issues which may come before the HSAC for its review, there may be a need for additional expertise on the committee during future meetings. The SAB Staff Office can supplement the committee with additional members at a later time if necessary.

EPA staff then presented potential issues for advice from the HSAC. Several items mentioned include: a consultation on the Water Sentinel Pilot Program before its implementation; consultation on future technologies which may become available for the detection of contaminants; biological risk assessment methods; and decision support tools for rapid identification of contaminants.

Next Meeting

After discussion between Agency staff and the committee members, it was determined that the next meeting of the HSAC will tentatively be a two day meeting which will occur in the Fall of 2005. The first day will include a consultation on the Water Sentinel program. The second day will be a consultation on risk assessments for biological and chemical terrorist agents. Dr. Paul Liroy and Dr. Rae Zimmerman offered to work with the Agency to develop the agenda for the risk assessment portion of the meeting. Dr. Vicki Bier offered to help in the development of the agenda for the Water Sentinel consultation.

Discussion of a consultation by the HSAC on risk communication between the Agency and its various clients was presented by the HSAC chair and committee members as an important topic area for future meetings.

Dr. Baruch Fischhoff thanked the committee for their service on this important committee and closed the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted:

Certified as True:

/Signed/

Heidi L. Bethel, Ph.D.
HSAC DFO

/Signed/

Baruch Fischhoff, Ph.D.
HSAC Chair

Date: August 4, 2005

List of Attachments

- Attachment A: [Panel Roster](#)
- Attachment B: [Meeting Agenda](#)
- Attachment C: [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: Partner in Protecting the Homeland
Power Point Presentation by Ms. Mary U. Kruger](#)
- Attachment D: [Water Security: An Overview of Progress to Date and Plans for the Future
Power Point Presentation by Ms. Cynthia C. Dougherty](#)
- Attachment E: [EPA's Emergency Preparedness and Response Program
Power Point Presentation by Ms. Dana Tulis](#)
- Attachment F: [EPA's National Homeland Security Research Center
Power Point Presentation by Mr. Andy Avel](#)