



THE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

OCT 13 2015

Robert J. Johnston, Ph.D.
Acting Chairman
Advisory Panel on the Report
on the Environment 2014
Science Advisory Board
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20460-0001

Dear Dr. Johnston:

I want to thank you and the members of the Science Advisory Board panel for your comments and recommendations on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's draft Report on the Environment 2014, which conveys the state of the environment and the progress of EPA programs.

As you likely know, the EPA released the final report on July 20, 2015. I very much appreciate the tremendous effort required to produce a thorough and constructive review of a report with such a broad scope. Recognizing that the Report on the Environment continues to be a valuable public resource is helpful in implementing the agency's strategic goals.

The EPA worked diligently to fulfill the panel's primary recommendation that we implement those changes most needed to expedite the official release of the Report on the Environment. These revisions to the website focused on content and usability issues. Specific revisions included improving the clarity of the introductory and explanatory material for the home page, the detailed guide, sustainability and "Where You Live," which has been renamed "Regional and State Trends" to reflect more appropriately the material now available in this feature. Indicators have been updated using the most recently available data. All broken links have been fixed, and we put in place a procedure that requires periodic checks for broken links.

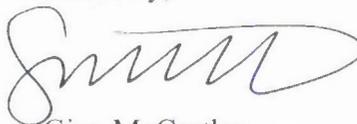
With regard to a conceptual framework and sustainability, the current release of the report presents a systems-based conceptual framework and an introduction to the topic of sustainability. You can see how these changes were implemented by visiting the website at www.epa.gov/roe.

In addition, the panel made several recommendations for strengthening the Report on the Environment and expanding the scope to allow for better integration of sustainability concepts, including new sustainability-related indicators and to provide interpretations of status and trends. The panel clearly recognized the large amount of data, resources and time necessary to develop and maintain the current report indicators. The panel also acknowledged that strengthening and expanding the report will be accomplished as resources and opportunities permit.

As we continue developing the report, my colleagues in the Office of Research and Development's National Center for Environmental Assessment will carefully consider these recommendations for strengthening the next iteration.

In the meantime, please know that I very much appreciate your thoughtful participation in furthering the development of the Report on the Environment and in supporting the EPA's mission to protect human health and the quality of our environment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gina McCarthy', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Gina McCarthy



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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

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Peter S. Thorne, Ph.D.
Chairman
Science Advisory Board
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20460-0001

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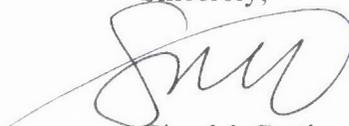
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Gina McCarthy