



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

MAR 31 2008

THE ADMINISTRATOR

EPA-CASAC-08-005

Dr. Rogene Henderson
Chair
Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee
Science Advisory Board
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., MC1400F
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Dr. Henderson:

Thank you very much for your letter of January 9, 2008, regarding the Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee Sulfur Oxides Primary National Ambient Air Quality Standards Review Panel's examination of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's *First External Review Draft of the Integrated Science Assessment for Sulfur Oxides – Health Criteria* (the draft SO_x ISA) on December 5 and 6, 2007. EPA greatly appreciates the CASAC panel's time and careful review of the complex science issues in the draft SO_x ISA.

You included a summary of CASAC's major comments and recommendations, as well as extensive comments from CASAC panel members. The advice and discussion of issues in the Panel's report have been very helpful to EPA scientists, who have been carefully considering this information as they revise the draft SO_x ISA. As you noted in your letter, this was one of the first draft Integrated Science Assessments, along with the *First External Review Draft of the Integrated Science Assessment for Oxides of Nitrogen – Health Criteria*, produced under EPA's revised process for review of the NAAQS, and your comments will help us continue to refine and sharpen our approach to developing ISAs.

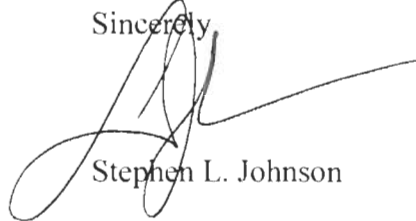
EPA will give full consideration to both the CASAC's comments and the recommendations and public comments the Agency receives during its revision of the first draft document. For example, in consideration of CASAC's advice, we will make more explicit the study selection framework and the methods for assessing evidence EPA uses in its formal characterization of the strength and consistency of human health effects from SO₂.

In response to the CASAC's comments regarding five-minute ambient SO₂ concentration data, EPA will survey and assess the available data from the SO₂ regulatory network and update its discussion in the ISA concerning ambient concentrations to reflect the utility of these data for helping to interpret possible human health effects. EPA is also focusing on the CASAC panel's

recommendations to further develop our integration and interpretation of newly available health evidence, particularly with regard to the levels at which effects are observed.

In closing, I thank you and the CASAC panel members for your review of the draft ISA. Your advice and detailed comments have been very valuable, and your contributions will continue to help us ensure that the best science is used to inform the regulatory process.

Sincerely,



Stephen L. Johnson

cc: Holly Stallworth
CASAC Sulfur Oxides Primary NAAQS Review Panel

*Thanks again
for your leadership
and the Committee work!*
J. Fee