



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

DEC 29 2008

THE ADMINISTRATOR

EPA-SAB-08-011

Dr. M. Granger Morgan
Chair
Science Advisory Board
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Dr. Morgan:

Thank you for your letter of September 30, 2008, transmitting the Science Advisory Board's Advisory on the Office of Research and Development's Ecological Research Program Multi-Year Plan. I thank the Science Advisory Board and the Ecological Processes and Effects Committee for their advice to the Agency on this critically important and highly promising program.

Strategic science-based stewardship of our environmental resources has been a central theme throughout my tenure as Administrator. The scientific foundation of stewardship must increasingly be based on the services and values of natural systems; systems that enable human social and economic well-being. I could not be more pleased that you support this program, as well as the good work ORD has done to advance the scientific foundation of ecosystem management. In time, I am hopeful that the information from this research will lead to science-based refinement of environmental protection. Such a refinement will logically follow as the total value of our ecosystems is better understood.

ORD has committed to the development of this program over the long term, as a core scientific effort. As a result, you will see an evolution of staffing and other resources consistent with the needs of the program. In the two specific areas mentioned, (1) valuation and (2) outreach and education, ORD will be reaching out to others for assistance. In the area of valuation, ORD has already added postdoctoral support and has brought experts into the research program to mentor staff. For outreach and education, ORD has developed a formal arrangement with the World Resources Institute. WRI brings an expansive and highly relevant set of relationships, as well as technical expertise, that will substantially leverage ORD resources.

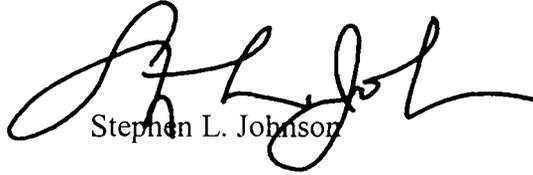
In addition, they have a strong communications program to assist with outreach. Similarly, ORD has entered into a formal relationship with National Geographic to prepare and maintain an atlas of ecosystem services. This atlas will not only be useful to scientists, but will also be a valuable tool in our joint outreach and education efforts. Furthermore, ORD is

engaging other agencies of the Federal Government and a variety of private firms and nongovernmental organizations involved in this area. The staff is now revising the multi-year plan based on the comments the SAB has made. Therefore, I will not attempt to address your specific recommendations for improvements. Rather, it is my understanding that ORD has requested a consultation with EPEC to review the revised plan.

At that time, far more details will be available for the components of the program than were available in April, and the SAB will be able to see if we have captured its recommendations.

Once again, I want to express my appreciation for the work of the SAB in guiding this important new direction, and I hope continued interactions between the two groups will lead to the program's success.

Sincerely,



Stephen L. Johnson