



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

December 20, 2001

THE ADMINISTRATOR

Dr. William H. Glaze
Dr. Raymond C. Loehr
Science Advisory Board
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Dr. Glaze and Dr. Loehr:

Thank you for sending me a copy of *Implementation of the Environmental Protection Agency's Peer Review Program: An SAB Evaluation of Three Reviews* (EPA-SAB-RSAC-01-009). I was very pleased to learn you found vigorous peer review making a difference in the case studies you examined. Your report included several thoughtful recommendations, and I appreciate the opportunity to respond.

- First, you recommend the development of a continuing in-depth analysis to examine trends in the use of peer review, evaluate its impacts on decision-making, and identify opportunities for improving its benefits. To assist us in evaluating this proposal, I would appreciate if the SAB could provide more detail on the recommended method and scope of this analysis.
- You note that there are important products not subject to peer review. While the vast majority of technical products used in EPA decisions receive peer review, in response to your recommendation, we will reexamine our efforts and explore the examples cited in your report with the affected offices.
- Again, additional detail would be helpful in assessing the report's third recommendation – that EPA evaluate and document how peer review is being employed to address the use of science in the specific rules and general decision-making. In this regard, I have directed the Office of Research and Development to become engaged in all significant regulatory and non-regulatory activities involving science. Its staff will work with the program offices to ensure that all technical documents used in regulatory and other decisions undergo peer review in accordance with the Peer Review Policy.
- Finally, you suggest the development of a uniform process for collecting and documenting peer review decisions. EPA has revised the Peer Review Handbook to require that the peer review record must contain a document describing the Agency's response to peer review comments.

Again, thank you both for the report. If you have any questions or outstanding concerns, please contact Kevin Teichman, Associate Director for Science, Office of Science Policy, at (202) 564-6705.

Sincerely yours,

/S/

Christine Todd Whitman