



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

FEB 1 2002

THE ADMINISTRATOR

Dr. Philip K. Hopke
Chair, Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Dr. Hopke:

Thank you for providing me with the Science Advisory Board Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee's (CASAC) review of the Second External Review Draft of the *Air Quality Criteria Document for Particulate Matter*.

I appreciate your kind words about the content and quality of the March 2001 draft compared to the version reviewed by CASAC in 1999. Clearly, the 1999 draft was incomplete considering the volume of potentially pertinent scientific information that has since become available. Since these new data required analysis and incorporation into an already complex and large document, EPA did not expect that CASAC would reach closure on this version of the draft.

With regard to the questions, concerns, and issues identified by the members of the CASAC PM Panel, please be assured that EPA will give due consideration to both the Panel's comments and those received from members of the public. EPA is also considering hundreds of new studies that have become available since the development of the March 2001 Second External Review Draft, including those accepted for publication through December 2001.

EPA is already revising the March 2001 report to improve the structure of the document and is developing key integrative syntheses and executive summary chapters. Other specific revisions include addressing the need for more extensive treatment of air quality, exposure, and health effects issues related to thoracic coarse particles. EPA expects to complete the Third External Review Draft in early spring 2002, which will prompt the next CASAC review and signal the start of a 60-day public comment period. EPA expects to request a CASAC review meeting in late June 2002.

Again, thank you for your thoughtful review of this document. Best wishes to you and everyone at the Science Advisory Board's Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee.

Sincerely yours,

/S/

Christine Todd Whitman