



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

NOV 16 2009

THE ADMINISTRATOR

David A. Dzombak, Ph.D.
Chairman
Environmental Engineering Committee
Science Advisory Board
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Dr. Dzombak:

I want to express my appreciation to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Science Advisory Board's Environmental Engineering Committee for its consultation on the Office of Research and Development's Aging Water Infrastructure Research Program. I am very encouraged by the committee's reassurance that ORD's AWI program is headed in the right direction and that this program is "well poised" to make a national impact.

While we are pleased at the overall results of the SAB consultation on the AWI Research Program, we clearly recognize that the program can be improved and enhanced to maintain its momentum and to succeed in moving our national water infrastructure toward long-term, sustainable performance and continued protection of public health and the environment. I want to acknowledge that our nation faces significant water infrastructure challenges. As a consequence, I want to assure the committee that ORD's investment in this area will be wisely managed to optimize the results and impact of our program.

Your September 1, 2009, letter to me, along with its accompanying attachments, has been carefully reviewed. The thoughtful and insightful comments from each of the Committee's panel members provide numerous suggestions and recommendations for improving the many facets of ORD's AWI Research Program. Each recommendation will be carefully considered for integration into the program. The following presents broad recommendations made by the panel and ORD's initial plans to address the recommendations:

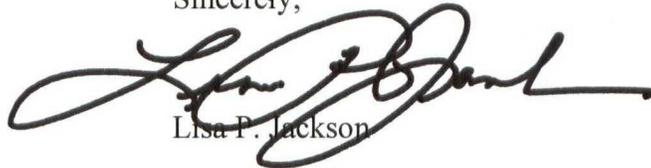
- The committee strongly suggested that ORD develop a vision for the nation's water infrastructure and a clear strategic focus for the AWI Research Program that will lead our national water industry towards this vision. ORD has made a commitment to lead a collaborative effort to develop this future vision, which will then be used as a national road map that challenges the research community and the water industry to reach the goal of sustainable, total water management.

- The committee recommended that ORD develop measures to help determine the successes of the program. I agree that it is vital to the sustainability of the program to show tangible outcomes. ORD is now committed to developing a diverse suite of metrics that will assist us in showing the tangible outcomes of the AWI Research Program. As recommended by the panel, these will include measuring the degree to which innovative technologies are being adopted, as well as the resultant improvement in water infrastructure performance, resilience and sustainability.
- The committee highlighted that it is very important that ORD not repeat research being conducted by other government agencies, water and wastewater utilities, and other research foundations and institutions. Rather, the panel recommended that ORD work to complement and leverage the work of these other groups. I assure you that ORD will continue to effectively leverage its resources and research activities to provide the maximum benefit to the nation. As you are aware, the recently awarded cooperative agreement with the Water Environment Research Foundation provides an excellent vehicle for this type of research cooperation and leveraging.
- The committee was impressed with ORD's comprehensive communication plan. As recommended by the committee, ORD will continue its forward-looking and sustained communication program. ORD's AWI communication program will enhance its focus on key target audiences, developing technical communication and technology transfer products that advance the state of the technology and move our national water infrastructure towards a sustainable future.

ORD will also thoughtfully consider the detailed comments and recommendations made by each member of the panel and by March 31, 2010, ORD will develop an update to its AWI Research Plan that will incorporate the results of this SAB consultation. In addition, ORD will maintain active interaction with the SAB Environmental Engineering Committee over the coming months and years.

Once again, I thank the committee members for their careful review and insightful recommendations to help us enhance this critically important research program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lisa P. Jackson", written in a cursive style. The signature is positioned above the printed name.

Lisa P. Jackson