



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

OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR  
SCIENCE ADVISORY BOARD

May 13, 1993

EPA-SAB-EC-COM-93-003

The Honorable Carol M. Browner  
Administrator  
US Environmental Protection Agency  
401 M Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20460

RE: Interim response on the SAB review of Agency's  
Chafee-Lautenberg study of the risks from radon  
exposure and the costs of mitigating such risks

Dear Ms. Browner:

As a result of language contained in the Department of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and Independent Agencies Appropriation Act, 1993, P.L. 102-398, Section 519, 106 STAT 1618 (1992), the Congress is requiring that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency "...conduct a risk assessment of radon considering: (A) the risk of adverse human health effects associated with exposure to various pathways of radon; (B) the costs of controlling or mitigating exposure to radon; and (C) the costs of radon control or mitigation experienced by households and communities, including the costs experienced by small communities as the result of such regulations. Such an evaluation shall consider the risks posed by the treatment or disposal of any wastes produced by water treatment. The Science Advisory Board shall review the Agency's study ["Chafee-Lautenberg (C-L) Study"] and submit a recommendation to the Administrator on its findings. The Administrator shall report the Administrator's findings and the Science Advisory Board recommendation to the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works and the House Committee on Energy and Commerce. Not later than July 31, 1993, the Administrator shall publish the Administrator's study and risk assessment and the Science Advisory Board recommendation."

In order to assist the Agency in meeting the July 31 delivery date, two committees of the SAB (the Radiation Advisory Committee and the Drinking Water Committee) conducted separate public meetings in February to review the technical documents that will form part of the basis of the Agency's C-L Study. The



Recycled/Recyclable  
Printed on paper that contains  
at least 75% recycled fiber

reports from these two Committees were reviewed and discussed at the meeting of the SAB Executive Committee (EC) on April 22-23, 1993.

During that discussion, in which representatives of both the Office of Water and the interested public took part, it became clear that the material received to date by the SAB are not sufficient for the Board to complete its review in April as originally intended. Specifically, in addition to reviewing the background materials for the Agency's C-L Study, which the Board is now doing, the SAB is obligated by the Act to review the Study itself. It is now our understanding that a draft of the C-L Study will be available for SAB review sometime during the summer, at which time the Board will conduct an expeditious review.

Given these constraints, we urge the Agency to consider carefully the time required to prepare the C-L Study, to obtain substantive review by the SAB, and to react appropriately. The Agency may well find that the overall schedule will require time beyond the current July 31, 1993 deadline. It is our understanding that members of the Congress have indicated a willingness to extend the deadline, if additional time is required; cf., March 11, 1993, letter from nine senators to you.

The major concern of the Board is with the quality and credibility of the C-L Study and the SAB review. If additional time is needed to produce a worthy product, then the Agency should request an extension.

In summary, the SAB will be transmitting to you three reports that deal with the Congressional request:

a) The SAB's Review of the Uncertainty Analysis of Radon Risk

The EC approved a draft of this report at its April meeting. The SAB Staff will transmit the completed report to you shortly.

b) The SAB's Review of Costs of Mitigating Indoor Radon

The EC reviewed, but did not approve, a draft of this report at its April meeting. Based upon a thorough discussion of the matter, the EC referred the report back to its Drinking Water Committee for further analysis and editing. The completed SAB review of the Costs of Mitigating Indoor Radon will be transmitted to you within the next few months.

The Board's comments were clear at the EC meeting, however, and should provide the Agency with a clear understanding of the additional work

needed to prepare a technically sound C-L Study for the Congress.

c) The SAB's Review of the Agency's C-L Study

The EC has established a Steering Committee to oversee completion of the first two SAB reports and to conduct a public review of the Agency's C-L Study when it becomes available this summer. This SAB report will provide a succinct analysis of the Agency's multi-media assessment of the risks of radon gas from various sources and cost estimates for mitigating those risks.

In closing, we want to assure you that the Board is committed to providing you and the Agency with sound advice on complex technical matters in a timely manner. We are continually exploring new ways to provide this information in a manner that best meets the needs of the Agency, the Congress, and the public.

We look forward to your response on the adequacy of the plan and the timeliness of the schedule that we have outlined above.

Sincerely,



Dr. Raymond C. Loehr, Chair  
Executive Committee  
Science Advisory Board



Dr. Roger O. McClellan, Chair  
Chafee-Lautenberg Steering  
Committee  
Science Advisory Board

