



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 7
901 NORTH 5TH STREET
KANSAS CITY, KANSAS 66101

JUN 01 2011

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Response to the Science Advisory Board's (SAB) Committee on Science Integration for Decision Making's Question to the Regional Science Liaisons (RSL) Request for Top Recommendations

FROM: Brenda Groskinsky, Science Policy Advisor and Office of Research & Development's (ORD) Regional Science Liaison for EPA Region 7

TO: Angela Nugent, Designated Federal Officer, EPA Science Advisory Board

On April 7, 2011, following the March 2011 meeting of EPA's Science Advisory Board's (SAB) Committee on Science Integration for Decision Making, Dr. Thomas A. Burke, Chair, sent a follow-up request to the Office of Research and Development's (ORD) Regional Science Liaisons (RSLs), through me, in my role representing EPA Region 7 as Lead Region for ORD and Regional Science & Technology (RS&T). His request is as follows:

As we prepare our final list of findings and recommendations I think it is really important that we represent the perspective of the regional science leadership. I would therefore like to request that we follow up on the request the Committee made at our last meeting that we would like a brief list of their top needs or recommendations to improve the integration of science into regional decision making.

The RSLs welcome the opportunity to provide additional comment, and clarification, to the committee on this important topic of science integration. Thank you for the inquiry. Please allow the RSLs to respectfully submit the following recommendations in response to Dr. Burke.

- For regions that regularly identify and compile regional science priorities, those RSLs would like to have formal process to submit these priorities to ORD. The RSLs would also like to see a formal approach that tracks regional science needs submitted to ORD. The RSLs and the regions would like to know if, and how, these requests are incorporated into ORD's research and/or the research planning process(es). The RSLs suggest that these regional requests be identified by an ORD contact, so that the request can be followed, there is opportunity to provide feedback, and the regions can be informed of interim and final products. The RSLs request that these final products, noting the emphasis on regional science needs, allow for regional access (if for example the product is a database), and incorporate an element of training.
- The RSLs feel that we would benefit from a mechanism that tracks, and queries, all of ORD's project level research and tool development (intra and extramural). ORD's National Center for Environmental Research's (NCER) database is an example application that contains pertinent



information for EPA's extramural research projects. We find that EPA's Science Inventory application (due to its public availability requirement) is lacking in functionality, for our purposes of integrating science into regional decision making, because the information contained in the inventory is final and too general. Again, the RSLs want to understand and provide feedback for on-going research as it is in process, and not years later after it has been completed. We would like this application to also include a searchable directory of ORD scientists' expertise. And we suggest that an Agency-wide calendar, and archive of scientific webinars and accompanying presentation materials, would be useful.

- On a final note, please allow the RSLs to revisit the original charge to the committee to evaluate how EPA is integrating scientific assessment practices into environmental decision-making, noting the recommendations from National Research Council's 2009 "Silver Book", *Science in Decisions: Advancing Risk Assessment*, authored by the Committee on Improving Risk Analysis Approaches Used by the U.S. EPA, and the SAB's "Framework for Integrated Environmental Decision-making" listed in the 2000 SAB document, *Toward Integrated Environmental Decision-Making* (EPA-SAB-ED-00-0111). As a reiteration of comments voiced by some of the regions, and documented in your draft report, *Science Integration for Decision Making, March 11, 2011* on p. 37, we feel that the goal of achieving science integration would gain more ground if the authors, of the various advice documents, also consider a translation and roll-out process for their products. The RSLs suggest that science integration would be furthered by a national policy, or implementation strategy, that uses a "quick start" guide, with clear actionable tasks for EPA managers, scientists, and staff, who work at the operational level.

cc: Robert Hillger, RSL Region 1
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