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**8/13/12 Draft**

The Honorable Lisa P. Jackson  
Administrator  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20460

Subject: SAB Recommendations for EPA's FY2012 Scientific and Technological  
Achievement Awards

Dear Administrator Jackson:

The EPA Science Advisory Board (SAB) is pleased to transmit its recommendations for the FY 2012 Scientific and Technological Achievement Awards (STAA). The STAA program was established in 1980 to recognize EPA employees who have made outstanding contributions to the advancement of science and technology through their publications in peer-reviewed literature or books. The SAB has been asked by EPA's Office of Research and Development to review EPA's nominated scientific papers and make recommendations for awards. We are pleased to continue to play an important role in the STAA program.

This year, the Agency submitted a total of 106 nominations comprised of 160 publications in 14 science and technology categories. The SAB excluded two nominations from consideration since they did not meet the eligibility criteria. Of the 104 remaining nominations, the SAB recommends 43 for monetary awards and another 36 as deserving of Honorable Mention. Of the nominations recommended for monetary awards, 4 were recommended for Level I, the highest award; 10 for Level II; and 29 for Level III. The SAB's recommendations are provided in the enclosed appendices.

The SAB concludes that the 2012 STAA nominations are of very high quality, and commends the Agency for its superior research publications. The SAB also appreciates the Agency's implementation of the SAB recommendations from last year's review regarding STAA nomination procedures. This year, the SAB has additional recommendations to further strengthen the STAA program.

The SAB applauds the Agency's public recognition of the scientific work of EPA scientists and engineers through publication in the peer-reviewed literature. Thank you for providing the SAB with the opportunity to assist the Agency with this important program. The SAB looks forward to reviewing the FY 2013 nominations.

Enclosures

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## **NOTICE**

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## 1. BACKGROUND

EPA's Scientific and Technological Achievement Awards (STAA) were established in 1980 to recognize the Agency's scientists and engineers who published their technical work in the peer-reviewed literature. The STAA program is administered and managed by the EPA Office of Research and Development (ORD). Each year, the EPA Science Advisory Board (SAB) has been asked to review the EPA's nominated scientific publications and make recommendations for awards. The SAB was charged to review nominations and provide recommendations for each nomination in consideration of the EPA's criteria for STAA awards. The EPA announced the call for nominations for the 2012 STAA program to senior managers and employees in January 2012 (Appendix A). ORD screened nominations for conformance with EPA's *STAA Nomination Procedures and Guidelines*. The Guidelines describe the award levels, eligibility criteria, and the award criteria. In June 2012, ORD submitted to the SAB Staff Office 106 nominations for 2012 STAA awards in 14 possible science and technology categories.

The EPA's criteria for STAA Program awards are as follows:

- Level I awards are for nominees who have accomplished an exceptionally high-quality research or technological effort. The nomination should recognize the creation or general revision of a scientific or technological principle or procedure, or a highly significant improvement in the value of a device, activity, program, or service to the public. It must be at least of national significance or have high impact on a broad area of science/technology. The nomination must be of far reaching consequences and recognizable as a major scientific/technological achievement within its discipline or field of study.
- Level II awards are for nominees who have accomplished a notably excellent research or technological effort that has qualities and values similar to, but to a lesser degree, than those described under Level I. It must have timely consequences and contribute as an important scientific/technological achievement within its discipline or field of study.
- Level III awards are for nominees who have accomplished an unusually notable research or technological effort. The nomination can be for a substantial revision or modification of a scientific/technological principle or procedure, or an important improvement to the value of a device, activity, program, or service to the public. It must relate to a mission or organizational component of the EPA, or significantly affect a relevant area of science/technology.
- Honorable Mention is a fourth, non-cash level award for nominations which are noteworthy but which do not warrant a Level I, II or III award. Honorable Mention applies to nominations that: (1) may not quite reach the level described for a Level III award; (2) show a promising area of research that the SAB wants to encourage; or (3) show an area of research that the SAB believes is too preliminary to warrant an award recommendation at this time.

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## 2. SAB REVIEW PROCEDURE

In response to the EPA's request, the SAB Staff Office formed a new SAB STAA Committee to review the nominations. The Committee was formed in accordance with the SAB process as described in the SAB 2002 publication, *Panel Formation Process: Immediate Steps to Improve Policies and Procedures* (EPA-SAB-EC-COM-02-003).

All nominations and nomination evaluation criteria were provided to the Committee in advance of the review meeting. The SAB review consisted of a two-step process: an initial review of each nomination, followed by a Committee discussion of all nominations. The initial review of each nomination was conducted by two or three members. Committee members provided their individual initial ratings of the nominations based on the EPA's award criteria as described under Section 1. The Committee met at a closed meeting on July 23-24, 2012, in Arlington, VA. The meeting was closed to the public to protect the personal privacy of the authors. Committee members discussed all nominations (see Table 1), and were asked to recuse themselves from the Committee deliberations on selected nominations to avoid an appearance of a lack of impartiality. The Committee reached consensus on the recommendations for awards. The Committee also discussed administrative recommendations for improving the STAA nomination process.

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**Table 1. 2012 STAA Nominations by Topic Category**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Number of Nominations Submitted to SAB</b>
Control Systems and Technology	2
Ecological Research	24
Energy and the Environment	1
Environmental Policy and Decisionmaking Studies	6
Health Effects Research and Human Health Risk Assessment	16
Homeland Security	2
Industry and the Environment	3
Integrated Risk Assessment	3 <sup>a</sup>
Monitoring and Measurement Methods	13 <sup>b</sup>
Other Environmental Research	6
Review Articles	9
Risk Management and Ecosystem Restoration	1
Sustainability and Innovation	4
Transport and Fate	16
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>106</b>

<sup>a</sup> One nomination submitted a news article for award. The SAB excluded this nomination because it did not meet the eligibility requirements for peer review (i.e., it was not published in a peer reviewed journal or as a peer reviewed book chapter).

<sup>b</sup> One nomination submitted ten publications for award. The SAB excluded this nomination because it did not meet the eligibility requirements (i.e., exceeded limits of each nomination to three publications).

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### 3. AWARD RECOMMENDATIONS

Table 2 summarizes the awards by year since 2002, including the recommendations for 2012. The Committee recommended 43 nominations for 2012 STAA monetary awards and another 36 for Honorable Mention. Of the works recommended for monetary awards, 4 were recommended for Level I, 10 for Level II, and 29 for Level III. Appendix B lists the recommended monetary awards and nominations that deserve an Honorable Mention. The final rankings were agreed to at the meeting by Committee consensus. One award was based upon a vote by the Committee members as to yes, no, or abstention. Table 3 summarizes the distribution of 2012 award recommendations among categories.

**Table 2. Comparison of Award Recommendations over Time**

<b>Award Level</b>	<b>FY 2002</b>	<b>FY 2003</b>	<b>FY 2004</b>	<b>FY 2005</b>	<b>FY 2006</b>	<b>FY 2007</b>	<b>FY 2008</b>	<b>FY 2009</b>	<b>FY 2010</b>	<b>FY 2011</b>	<b>FY 2012</b>
<b>Nominations Reviewed</b>	140	136	146	110	90	140	130	109	121	130	104 <sup>a</sup>
<b>Level I</b>	4 (3%)	7 (5%)	6 (4%)	3 (3%)	5 (6%)	5 (4%)	5 (4%)	3 (3%)	5 (4%)	3 (2%)	4 (4%)
<b>Level II</b>	7 (5%)	18 (13%)	13 (9%)	6 (5%)	11 (12%)	13 (9%)	16 (12%)	22 (20%)	14 (12%)	13 (10%)	10 (10%)
<b>Level III</b>	26 (19%)	29 (21%)	32 (22%)	30 (27%)	29 (32%)	37 (26%)	30 (21%)	31 (28%)	42 (35%)	35 (27%)	29 (28%)
<b>Honorable Mention</b>	39 (28%)	33 (24%)	37 (25%)	31 (28%)	26 (29%)	45 (32%)	43 (33%)	25 (23%)	33 (27%)	44 (34%)	36 (35%)
<b>Not Recommended</b>	64 (46%)	49 (36%)	58 (40%)	40 (36%)	19 (21%)	40 (29%)	36 (28%)	28 (26%)	27 (22%)	35 (27%)	25 (24%)

<sup>a</sup> Two nominations were considered ineligible for consideration by the SAB (see Table 1).

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**Table 3. Summary Number of Award Recommendations by Category for FY2012**

Nomination Categories	Total Nominations	Award Levels				Honorable Mention
		I	II	III	Total	
Control Systems and Technology	2	0	0	0	0	1
Ecological Research	24	0	3	7	10	7
Energy and the Environment	1	0	0	1	1	0
Environmental Policy and Decision making Studies	6	1	0	3	4	1
Health Effects Research and Human Health Risk Assessment	16	2	2	4	8	7
Homeland Security	2	0	0	0	0	0
Industry and the Environment	3	0	0	1	1	0
Integrated Risk Assessment	2	0	1	0	1	0
Monitoring and Measurement Methods	12	0	1	2	3	6
Other Environmental Research	6	0	1	2	3	3
Review Articles	9	0	0	3	3	3
Risk Management and Ecosystem Restoration	1	0	0	0	0	0
Sustainability and Innovation	4	0	0	1	1	2
Transport and Fate	16	1	2	5	8	6
<b>TOTALS:</b>	<b>104</b>	4	10	29	43	36

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#### 4. ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

The SAB appreciates the EPA's implementation of the recommendations from last year's SAB report to the Administrator that improves the nomination process and enhances the integrity of the program. In particular, the SAB concludes that almost all of the 2012 nominations adhered to existing STAA program guidelines.

The SAB has the following recommendations to further strengthen the STAA program in future years:

##### *Additional Requirements for Nomination Form:*

- *Each nomination should include information on previous STAA awards received by primary author or co-authors.* The current nomination form requires a description of the relationship between the current nomination to any previous or current nomination(s) with similar subjects authored by the same group or subgroup. The SAB recommends that the current nomination form also provide information on whether any of these previous nominations received STAA awards.
- *Each nomination should include all supplemental materials submitted to journals.* Many journals encourage authors to submit supplementary information with their papers to assist the journal as it decides whether to publish the authored paper. The STAA criteria allow nominations to include supplemental material relevant to the nomination. The Committee encourages submitters to include supplementary information sent to journals since such material frequently provides useful context on the quality and innovativeness of the research and the potential consequences of the research within its discipline or field of study.

##### *Assurance of Completeness of Nomination Package:*

- *EPA should ensure that each nomination describes its relevance to EPA's mission.* The Agency's criteria for eligibility for awards include that nominations should describe their importance and impact upon the ability of the Agency to better accomplish its mission. Several nominations did not discuss how the publications relate to EPA's mission nor discuss how the publications have a direct impact on human health or the environment. The SAB requests that all nominations state how the nominated papers are expected to represent an important advancement of scientific knowledge or technology relevant to EPA's mission and human health or the environment.
- *Each nomination should discuss the relationship between publications within nominations comprised of multiple publications.* The Agency's nomination criteria include that up to three publications may be combined into one nomination if the publications have similar subjects and authors. Several nominations for 2012 STAA recognition did not discuss the link between subject matter for the different publications submitted as part of a single nomination. The SAB recognizes the importance of recognizing contributions made through the total output of EPA

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1 authors, and encourages EPA to ensure that the justifications for nominations comprising more  
2 than one publication clarify the relationship between publications within such nominations.

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2 **APPENDIX A - CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR THE 2012 STAA PROGRAM**  
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5  
6 January 17, 2012  
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8 **MEMORANDUM**  
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10  
11 **SUBJECT:** The 2012 Scientific and Technological Achievement Awards (STAA) Program  
12

13 **FROM:** Paul T. Anastas  
14 Assistant Administrator  
15

16 **TO:** Assistant Administrators  
17 Associate Administrators  
18 Regional Administrators  
19

20 It is a pleasure to announce this year's call for nominations for the 2012 Scientific and Technological  
21 Achievement Awards (STAA) program. This is an Agency-wide competition, judged by the Science  
22 Advisory Board (SAB), which recognizes outstanding published scientific and technical papers by the  
23 Agency's staff. This year's nominations will be accepted via electronic submission to  
24 [nomination.STAA@epa.gov](mailto:nomination.STAA@epa.gov).  
25

26 Attached are nomination procedures and guidelines, a program schedule, and nomination forms. Official  
27 2012 nomination forms are available for your convenience in MS Word and data entry capable Portable  
28 Document Format (PDF) at <http://epa.gov/ncer/staa/>. All nominations must be received no later than  
29 midnight ET Friday, February 17, 2012. Instructions for completion and electronic submission of  
30 nomination packages are attached. Please contact Todd Peterson at (703) 308-7224 or email him at  
31 [peterson.todd@epa.gov](mailto:peterson.todd@epa.gov) if there are any questions.  
32  
33

34 cc: EPA Science Advisory Board  
35 EPA Program Offices  
36 EPA Regional Offices  
37 ORD Center/Laboratory Directors  
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40 Attachments  
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January 17, 2012

**EPA SEEKING APPLICATIONS FOR 2012 STAA AWARDS**

**MEMORANDUM**

**SUBJECT:** The 2012 Scientific and Technological Achievement Awards (STAA) Program  
**FROM:** Paul T. Anastas  
Assistant Administrator (8101R)  
**TO:** All EPA Employees

I am pleased to issue this year's call for nominations for the EPA's prestigious 2012 Scientific and Technological Achievement Awards (STAA). Each year, EPA recognizes outstanding papers written by the Agency's staff and published in scientific and technical journals. STAA is open to all EPA employees. Nominations are judged by the EPA's Science Advisory Board (SAB), and managed by the Office of Research and Development. Nominations can be submitted in the following categories:

- Control Systems and Technology
- Ecological Research
- Health Effects Research and Human Health Risk Assessment
- Monitoring and Measurement Methods
- Transport and Fate
- Review Articles
- Risk Management and Ecosystem Restoration
- Integrated Risk Assessment
- Environmental Policy and Decision-Making Studies
- Homeland Security
- Industry and the Environment
- Energy and the Environment
- Sustainability and Innovation
- Other Environmental Research

STAA winners are eligible for monetary awards.

This year's nominations will be accepted via electronic submission to [nominations.STAA@epa.gov](mailto:nominations.STAA@epa.gov). You can find the nomination forms and guidelines and additional information about the STAA program at [www.epa.gov/ncer/staa/](http://www.epa.gov/ncer/staa/). Nominations will be accepted until midnight ET on Friday, February 17, 2012. Should questions arise, please contact Todd Peterson at (703) 347-7224 or [peterson.todd@epa.gov](mailto:peterson.todd@epa.gov).

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**APPENDIX B - NOMINATIONS RECOMMENDED FOR STAA AWARDS**

Note: The Appendix B list of Recommendations for 2012 STAA Program Awards is not provided for review by the 2012 STAA Committee. This list will be appended to the final letter to the Administrator after completion of the quality review by the chartered SAB.