



**National Advisory Council for
Environmental Policy and Technology**

April 8, 2009

Administrator Lisa Jackson
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Jackson:

Robert Sussman, your Senior Policy Counsel, provided an excellent briefing on your priorities at the March meeting of the National Advisory Council for Environmental Policy and Technology (NACEPT). The entire Council was enthusiastic about your emphasis on making science the backbone of the Agency's work, following the rule of law, and increasing transparency. Subsequently, we discussed the Council's own role and would like to offer our thoughts on ways we believe that NACEPT can be most useful to the Agency and to you.

Compared to other Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) groups, NACEPT has a mission and a diverse composition that allows it to take a broad and interdisciplinary perspective on a wide array of issues within EPA. For example, the Science Advisory Board, which also can look broadly throughout the Agency, does so through the lens of science. Other federal advisory committees (FACs) typically advise on a particular aspect of EPA such as a program or a regulation. NACEPT, through its mission and through its history, can provide advice on cross-cutting issues of technology and policy with few structural limitations.

NACEPT typically offers advice in response to requests from your office or from others in the Agency. To make the best use of NACEPT, it is important that these requests match the capabilities of the Council. NACEPT generally works best when it focuses on broad environmental issues and their economic, social and technological implications. Narrower issues may sometimes be addressed through NACEPT subcommittees.

In reviewing our past experience, it seems clear that NACEPT works best when the composition of the Council reflects a variety of disciplines and backgrounds, and the types of charges best suited for the Council are those that require diverse perspectives. NACEPT's particular advantage is its ability to integrate across disciplines and program areas to address cross cutting issues involving science, technology and policy; multiple levels of government; and broad national interests. It can help provide a long-term, big picture perspective that sees the interrelationships between issues and program areas.

As such, NACEPT is particularly well suited to exploring emerging issues and addressing fledgling innovative programs that may merit more internal attention or support. It is well suited to provide advice on how EPA can play a catalytic, leadership role where it may need to engage with multiple agencies and institutions. Recent NACEPT products such as *Outlook for EPA, Everyone's Business*, several reports on environmental technology, the series of advice letters on biofuels, and reviews of the Agency's Strategic Plan and its *Report on the Environment* illustrate the types of topics where NACEPT can make its best contributions.

We believe our nation is at a point of rare opportunity to reset the conversation about the environmental, economic, and social progress and that you can provide leadership by pursuing your priorities through innovative, integrative policy initiatives.

While NACEPT does not normally initiate its own projects, the Council felt that it may be helpful to suggest illustrative topics that could be appropriate for future NACEPT work:

Cross-Cutting Management Issues

Science and Policy. How can the use of scientists and scientific data best be integrated into EPA's diverse management and programmatic responsibilities?

Emerging Environmental Issues. How can EPA equip itself to be more forward looking in order to identify emerging environmental problems early and deal with them before they become difficult and expensive to solve? Are there technologies in the early stages of R&D that offer the possibility of providing major breakthroughs in environmental quality and, if so, what should EPA's role be in relation to these technologies?

Integration and Collaboration. What leadership and management strategies could be most effective for improving integration and active collaboration between programs and between programs and regions?

Life Cycle Assessment. How could EPA improve its capacity to do LCAs and apply them more effectively in many programs?

Workforce Development. What organizational changes and personal skills are needed to insure diversity, address issues EPA is likely to face in the future, and provide adequate training and opportunities for career development?

Action on Environmental Priorities

Public Engagement on Climate Change, Water Resources Sustainability and Ecosystem Integrity. How can EPA best communicate with and engage the public on what people can do on the ground in their personal lives and local communities to effectively address these critical challenges?

The Future of EPA's Water Programs. Are they addressing the right issues and are they structured to be most effective, including consideration of

transboundary issues associated with water resources management and ecosystem decline?

Global Issues. How can EPA contribute to policy development on global environmental issues as they relate to other concerns such as energy, trade and finance?

This list of potential topics is too lengthy to be taken up at once, but working with you and the OCEM staff, we are certain we could establish a feasible schedule for the Council to address your priorities. In whatever projects it undertakes, NACEPT works best when there is sufficient communication and interaction with the EPA program offices, when charges are well focused with clear goals, and when there is continual and informal, open discussions with EPA throughout the process. When charges are developed, one of the first steps should always be to identify any overlap between FACs and ensure coordination between them. Some topics may warrant adding one or more adjunct members or creating a subcommittee.

On behalf of the Council, I want to express our appreciation for the opportunity to provide this input and assure you that we stand ready to provide support in whatever ways that we can. I would be glad to meet with you to answer any questions you have and discuss priorities for NACEPT activity.

Sincerely,

//Signed//

Erik J. Meyers
NACEPT Chair

cc: Scott Fulton, Acting Deputy Administrator
Ray Spears, Deputy Chief of Staff
Robert Sussman, Senior Policy Counsel to the Administrator
Robert Goulding, Director of Operations
Rafael DeLeon, Director, Office of
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Sonia Altieri, NACEPT Designated Federal Officer