



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

May 8, 2019

THE ADMINISTRATOR

Mr. William G. Ross, Jr.
Chair
National Advisory Council for
Environmental Policy and Technology
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Mr. Ross:

Thank you for your leadership of the National Advisory Council for Environmental Policy and Technology and for the report on citizen science titled "Information to Action: Strengthening EPA Partnerships for Environmental Protection." Public engagement is a critical element in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's strategic plan, and we are committed to improving the effectiveness of platforms for public participation and meaningful engagement. We greatly appreciate the council's thorough review, thoughtful findings and recommendations on using citizen science approaches to advance environmental protection.

This second NACEPT report, which builds on the 2016 report titled "Environmental Protection Belongs to the Public: A Vision for Citizen Science at EPA," provides a valuable framework for strengthening the EPA's cooperative work with state, local and tribal governments. The report also provides helpful insights on building cooperative connections with non-governmental organizations and the private sector to leverage technology and grassroots efforts that support the agency's work. We appreciate the council's recommendations on how to reduce barriers to collaboration and better support equitable citizen science partnerships to accomplish mission-critical work at the EPA. These recommendations will help guide the EPA's future work on citizen science.

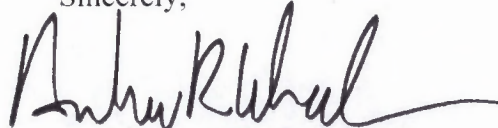
The NACEPT report has been shared internally with EPA staff and managers, as well as with external partner organizations. Through this collaborative process, we plan to more fully discuss the NACEPT recommendations and are now formulating a comprehensive EPA vision and strategy for citizen science. In September 2018, the EPA Office of the Inspector General provided recommendations from a self-initiated audit on the management controls for use of citizen science results at the EPA. The NACEPT report findings and recommendations contributed to this effort.

The EPA has a number of actions underway, consistent with the recommendations in the NACEPT reports. In addition to an agency staff workgroup that is preparing a vision and strategy

for using citizen science at the EPA, the agency recently released a quality-assurance handbook for citizen science projects, which can be found at <https://www.epa.gov/citizen-science/handbook-quality-assurance>. Outreach and training on the QA handbook is planned for this year. Once the vision and strategy are finalized, we will begin to examine data-management issues as well as managing the use of citizen science within the agency.

On behalf of the EPA, I thank you and all the NACEPT members for your valuable work in support of the EPA's mission to protect human health and the environment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew R. Wheeler", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Andrew R. Wheeler