



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

SEP 1 2010

THE ADMINISTRATOR

James H. Johnson Jr., Ph.D.
Professor and Dean Emeritus
College of Engineering,
Architecture and Computer Sciences
Howard University
Washington, D.C. 20059

Dear Dr. Johnson:

I would like to thank the National Advisory Committee for Environmental Policy and Technology and the Subcommittee on Promoting Environmental Stewardship for the very thoughtful letter of advice dated June 24, 2010. I commend the subcommittee's achievement in working through a wide-ranging topic and diverse perspectives to provide consensus recommendations. I offer my sincere appreciation to Subcommittee Co-chairmen David Paylor and Lee Paddock for their leadership and to the hardworking subcommittee members for the time, experience and creative thinking they dedicated to this task.

Building on NACEPT's March 2008 report, *Everyone's Business: Working Towards Sustainability Through Environmental Stewardship and Collaboration*, the recommendations suggest a number of strategic opportunities for better integrating the important concepts of stewardship and sustainability into the culture, practice and goals of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Environmental stewardship offers a vision of responsibility, accountability and action by all citizens: those in government, business, communities, nongovernmental organizations and academia. It is a key to achieving the human-health protection and environmental quality our times demand and subsequent generations deserve. Providing tools that individuals and organizations can use to take responsibility for their actions to protect and enhance human health and the environment complements both President Obama's vision for a new, green economy and my vision of a harmonious and mutually reinforcing relationship between environmental and economic progress. Moreover, helping individuals, communities and organizations gain a better understanding of the ways strong environmental protection contributes to our health, economic well-being and overall quality of life can expand the conversation on environmentalism to include virtually every member of our society.

I thank the subcommittee chairmen for meeting with members of my team to discuss the recommendations. I would like to share an initial response, framed by the four themes of your

letter of advice, while assuring you that we will continue to look for opportunities over time to advance the subcommittee's many thoughtful ideas.

Build stewardship capacity; knowledge and management: Public communications, internal management and ongoing input from stakeholders all offer important mechanisms for enhancing the government's effective promotion of environmental stewardship. I have already begun this work in my own interactions with the public. In speaking to diverse audiences about working for a greener environment and economy in which we achieve environmental justice and good health for our children, I urge all citizens to ask "How can I help?" With regard to internal management issues, I am grateful to the subcommittee representatives for offering comments during the recent public-review period on how one of our most important management tools, the EPA's Strategic Plan, might be used to highlight stewardship opportunities. These comments are under careful and active review. Also, we appreciate the suggestion that we explore how the Executive Management Council, composed of EPA's senior career leaders, might help the EPA best leverage its management processes and internal expertise to advance stewardship.

Increase the effectiveness and reach of existing and future partnership activities: Partnerships with outside parties can promote environmental stewardship, and they should be aimed at strategically supplementing regulation and enforcement. They also should be judicious in their use of the EPA's name as a means of leveraging participation. Building on an effort initiated by the Office of Air and Radiation, our Deputy Administrator is leading a review of the EPA's nonregulatory activities, including partnership programs. This effort coincides perfectly with one of the subcommittee's recommendations. This review will enable us to decide how to strengthen external engagement in the EPA's partnership activities and how to deploy our technical-assistance expertise to support the stewardship efforts of others. The upcoming State-EPA Innovation Symposium, scheduled for November, affords one near-term opportunity for stewardship experts from EPA programs and regions and from state environmental agencies to share their knowledge and best practices.

Use stewardship approaches to improve EPA regulatory tools: The EPA is actively engaged in several efforts aimed at strengthening the regulatory development process. To date, we have focused on incorporating consideration of environmental justice, children's health and climate-change adaptation into the development of new rules. The recently developed *Interim Guidance on Considering EJ During the Development of an Action* is a step-by-step guide that helps EPA staff ask questions and evaluate environmental justice considerations at key points in the rulemaking process. The guide is part of the EPA's efforts to advance environmental justice and to protect the health and safety of the historically underrepresented in the environmental decision-making process — minority, low-income and indigenous populations, and tribes — who are often most at risk from environmental hazards. Earlier this year, we also launched an important effort to provide the public a meaningful opportunity to participate in the agency's rulemaking process; the online Rulemaking Gateway serves as a portal to the EPA's priority rules. Not only does the Rulemaking Gateway offer citizens earlier and more concise information about agency regulations, it also allows users to search for EPA rules that relate to specific interests, including impacts on small business; children's health; environmental justice; and state, local and tribal government. Going forward, we are thinking creatively about a number of other ways regulatory design might be strengthened. Improving compliance, encouraging information

disclosure and harnessing the power of the market to advance technological innovation are just a few approaches we are likely to explore. All of these can support greater environmental stewardship and contribute to sustainable outcomes.

Measure progress and define success: The EPA is aggressively working to facilitate transparency, access and understanding – outcomes which go hand-in-hand with environmental stewardship. Some examples include the Report on the Environment, which is now updated quarterly on the web to offer the public, in real time, the best available indicators of national conditions and trends in air, water, land, human health and ecological systems. This report, together with other information on the EPA's website, makes more information available to the public than the annual reports from the Council on Environmental Quality were able to provide. We also recognize that measurement and evaluation are critical to determining our progress in meeting environmental goals. We are examining innovative information and measurement tools that might help us better understand and communicate environmental performance. I am especially enthusiastic about our recent rules requiring reporting of greenhouse-gas emissions from the largest sources. This reporting is a valuable first step for gathering data on greenhouse-gas emissions, measuring our progress in achieving reductions and informing future climate-change mitigation and adaptation policies and strategies. This is a fertile frontier on which we can make significant progress.

As you can see, the subcommittee's recommendations speak to my priorities and inform a number of EPA efforts now under way. In the months ahead, we will continue to explore additional ways in which the EPA can engage all parts of society in working to realize a sustainable economy and environment that supports strong quality of life for all Americans.

I offer my sincere thanks to NACEPT and the dedicated members of the Subcommittee on Promoting Environmental Stewardship for your advice on how we can promote the use of stewardship to protect human health and the environment.

Sincerely,



Lisa P. Jackson

cc: Bob Perciasepe,
Deputy Administrator

Cynthia Jones-Jackson,
Acting Director
Office of Cooperative Environmental
Management



