



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

AUG 20 2003

OFFICE OF  
WATER

EPA-823-R-03-010  
EPA-823-F-03-011

Dear Colleague:

I am pleased to send to you the *Strategy for Water Quality Standards and Criteria: Setting Priorities to Strengthen the Foundation for Protecting and Restoring the Nation's Waters*. If you were among those who participated in the listening sessions or provided comments, I want to thank you for your help in making this final *Strategy* a customer-centered product. We appreciate your assistance.

The Strategy focuses on what the Office of Science and Technology (OST) and other EPA offices need to accomplish to meet the program needs of EPA, the states and the authorized tribes. OST's efforts on the Strategy began in 2001 and is the result of a wide-ranging review and analysis of the water quality standards and criteria program within the context of all clean water programs. In the development of the Strategy, the workgroup focused on actions that would address the major needs of the water quality criteria and standards program and other programs that link to water quality standards. The workgroup also sought input from states, EPA program offices and stakeholder groups through more than 50 listening sessions with over 350 people during April-September 2001.

We made a number of revisions to the May 2002 draft of the *Strategy* based on written comments from many of you and based on further discussions with EPA and state staff. The main focus of the revisions was to define clear priorities among the strategic actions and to establish reasonable milestones for those actions. The final *Strategy* contains ten priority strategic actions that OST will take in collaboration with other EPA offices, including Regional Offices, states and authorized tribes over the next six years to strengthen and improve the water quality standards and criteria program. These strategic actions are critical to making progress on the most important environmental problems, to accelerate the adoption and use of appropriate water quality standards, to reduce the burdens and impediments to program implementation, and to promote broad participation in activities affecting the Nation's surface waters.

Copies of this document (EPA-823-R-03-010) can be obtained from the National Service Center for Environmental Publications, P.O. Box 42419, Cincinnati, OH., 45242, by phone at 1-800-490-9198, or on the web site at [www.epa.gov/ncepihom/ordering.htm](http://www.epa.gov/ncepihom/ordering.htm). A pdf version of this document is available for viewing or downloading from OST's home page at [www.epa.gov/waterscience/standards/strategy](http://www.epa.gov/waterscience/standards/strategy).

We appreciate your continued interest in EPA's activities related to water quality.

Sincerely,

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

Denise Keehner, Director  
Standards and Health Protection Division

Enclosure