

December 11, 1995

EPA-SAB-EC-COM-96-002

The Honorable Carol Browner  
Administrator  
U.S. Environmental Agency  
401 M Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20460

Subject: Science Advisory Board Commentary on the Consideration of  
Results of Foreign Assessments

Dear Ms. Browner:

The Science Advisory Board (SAB) reviews many Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reports. Increasingly, other countries, especially in the European Union and Japan, prepare sophisticated, high quality assessments of environmental risks which are also being evaluated by EPA (e.g. contaminated river sediments, dioxin, etc.). While EPA reports often refer to data resulting from foreign technical studies, they seldom refer to other countries' risk assessments. We write to suggest that EPA's reports would be strengthened if they referred to the risk assessment conclusions reached by other countries.

In discussing this issue at our recent Executive Committee meeting, we learned of your March 21, 1995 Risk Characterization Policy. While it does not specifically require that the conclusions of risk assessments from foreign countries be mentioned in EPA documents, it does indicate that risks estimated by EPA should "...be compared with past Agency decisions, (and) decisions by other federal or state agencies..." , where appropriate.

We agree with this point and think that this policy regarding risk decisions might be expanded to include comparisons with information gained from other countries' evaluations of environmental risks. This information would be quite useful to us when we evaluate EPA's technical positions.

Sincerely,

Dr. Genevieve Matanoski, M.D., Chair  
Science Advisory Board

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