



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

JUL 25 2008

OFFICE OF
RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Gregg Grunenfelder
Chairman, National Drinking Water Advisory Council
Assistant Secretary
Division of Environmental Health
Washington State Department of Health
P.O. Box 47820
Olympia, Washington 98504-7820

Dear Mr. Grunenfelder:

Thank you for your letter of June 24, 2008, expressing NDWAC's recommendations about the need for health effects research in support of the Safe Drinking Water Act. We agree that health effects research is critical for ensuring that drinking water is protective of public health, and we strive to align our research programs to address the highest priority research needs.

Health effects research is an integral component of the Office of Research and Development's (ORD) Drinking Water Research Program (DWRP), which is designed around the risk-assessment/risk-management paradigm. In fact, over half of the personnel contributing to the DWRP conduct research to better understand health effects associated with exposure to waterborne contaminants. In addition, our exposure/health effects research is coordinated with risk-management research activities. We also have a strong extramural research program within the DWRP, which is currently working through our Science to Achieve Results (STAR) program to support research targeted at developing advanced methods to quantify waterborne pathogens, cyanobacterial toxins, and improve our ability to quantify microbial risks.

We have been actively engaged with our partners in the Office of Water to identify the critical health effects research needed to address the highest priority contaminants on the Contaminant Candidate List (CCL3). Once the CCL3 is finalized, we will implement a tiered research approach that includes screening, prioritization, and targeted health effects studies. The DWRP also partners with several other ORD research programs in the conduct of health effects research, including the Human Health Research Program (HHRP), Safe Pesticides/Safe Products (SP2), and the Endocrine Disruptors (EDCs) Research Programs. We also have benefited from applying the tools being developed by the National Center for Computational Toxicology (NCCT) to screen and evaluate chemicals that might pose risks in drinking water.

As you can see, we believe that health effects research is an important, essential, and critical aspect of ensuring the safety of drinking water, and we truly value NDWAC's recommendations.

Thank you again for your letter. We appreciate your interest in our research program. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or our National Program Director for Drinking Water, Dr. Audrey Levine at phone 202-564-1070 or email levine.audrey@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin Teichman", written over a large, stylized scribble of lines.

Kevin Teichman
Deputy Assistant Administrator