



# OFFICE OF THE SCIENCE ADVISOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

2016 Annual Report

## LETTER FROM THOMAS BURKE, EPA SCIENCE ADVISOR

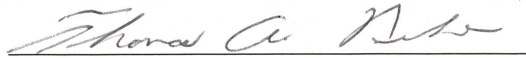


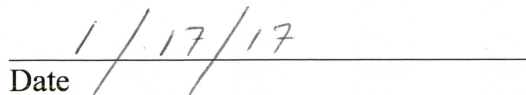
Science is a keystone in the foundation that supports the Environmental Protection Agency. Science is dynamic. New discoveries are constant and our understanding of complex issues changes over time. Scientific discovery, knowledge, translation, implementation, and uncertainty are all fundamental to the scientific process. At EPA we focus on using the best science to form our understanding of how to protect people and the environment. Accurate scientific information lets us know the severity of environmental hazards, the people at risk, and how best to prevent adverse events and improve health and the environment. Accurate scientific information is important not only when we respond to an emergency, but also to prevent disease and protect the environment in years to come.

The EPA Science Advisor plays an essential role within the agency. The Science Advisor is also the leader of the Agency's Office of Research and Development which conducts applied environmental and human health research that will inform program and regional decisions in the future. This research depth is critical for the Science Advisor to align available resources and expertise with program and regional needs or when asked to respond to National or local emergencies. The Science Advisor also promotes Agency-wide science policies that are intended to harmonize science practices and policies across the Agency. The Office of the Science Advisor (OSA) supports this aspect of the Science Advisor's role. OSA supports the Science and Technology Policy Council (STPC) and its standing groups that promote uniform practices for risk assessment, environmental measurements, our laboratory enterprise, and peer review practices. OSA also implements the agency's policies and practices for scientific integrity and human subjects research protection.

This past year has been filled with accomplishments and challenges for OSA. We finalized EPA's *Plan to Increase Access to EPA-funded Research Results* and implemented the plan for all ORD intramural research published in 2016. We completed EPA's first Strategic Foresight Planning Pilot; released Best Practices for Designating Authorship; and trained thousands of EPA staff on scientific integrity, human subjects research protections, and peer review policies. We have also revised our charters for the STPC and the Risk Assessment Forum. This effort should result in greater oversight by the STPC in selecting and approving projects. Revised review procedures and enhanced project tracking should result in better products that are completed faster and have more impact across the Agency.

It has been a privilege to work with the OSA staff, who have supported me in my role as the Science Advisor. This dedicated team has made my job easier and the Agency stronger. Thank you all for the hard work that you do.

  
Thomas A. Burke, Ph.D., MPH

  
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