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December 15, 2000

Honorable Carol M. Browner
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Ms. Browner:

On behalf of the National Advisory Council for Environmental Policy and Technology (NACEPT), I would like to offer the Council's preliminary perspectives on key issues related to its recent charge from the EPA. As an anticipatory and visionary body, NACEPT launched its strategic action agenda for FY 2000-01 at its planning meeting on September 18 - 19, 2000. The Council began to address the charge during its meeting on November 8 - 9, 2000 in coordination with the Agency's senior leadership.

The Council was asked to address issues related to the following three areas: 1) integration of EPA's three key planning processes; 2) identification of emerging issues and trends; and 3) evaluation of EPA's workforce capacity efforts. In anticipation of this Administration's transition, we are reporting the Council's preliminary findings. Please note that our activities are continuing, and will result in final recommendations during the Spring of 2001.

Integration of EPA's Key Planning Processes

The EPA asked the Council to help define a process that it can use to integrate the Agency's information and technology, human resource management, and strategic planning processes. After gaining a better understanding of the planning activities and to establish a baseline for integration of the key planning processes of the Office of Environmental Information, Office of Administration and Resource Management, and Office of the Chief Financial Officer, the Council believes that:

- Improving alignment and linkage of goal development, time cycles, and budget planning of the three offices will be beneficial. In particular, the Council recommends that the human resources and information management goals should be integrated as part of the Agency's strategic planning and support the achievement of EPA's strategic goals.
- Specific recommendations to guide the development of an integrated planning process will include principles and elements to effective planning, as well as

implementation suggestions based on the experience of others involved in efforts to integrate these critical planning functions.

- Effective human resources planning and the promotion and institutionalization of E-Government (high quality, timely, secure government information and management over the internet) will be essential. Strong links to the powerful tool of the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) should be sought to ensure the full implementation of planning goals for each of the offices.

Emerging Issues and Trends

The identification of key environmental issues and trends facing EPA over the next five to 10 years is a major component of NACEPT's business operation. Utilizing the Agency's existing forecasting tools and building upon these, the Council foresees at least three major environmental trends

- Environmental regulation is moving toward more holistic approaches to address pollution issues, acknowledging the well-worn maxim that "pollution does not respect boundaries."
- It is anticipated that the move from command and control regulation will continue requiring more creative approaches to tackle the difficult, persistent environmental problems.
- As we continue in the "information age," environmental regulators are increasingly seeing the power of information as a way to improve environmental performance, and to increase access to information.

In addition, the Council is continuing to investigate issues related to the globalization of environmental problems, producer responsibility principles for product take back, emerging science, geo-spatial information technology, technology acceptance, economic and cost benefit analysis, and the sunset of the Superfund law. EPA should be mindful that human resource planning plays a pivotal role in attracting and retaining the types of employees that will be needed to address these emerging issues and trends.

Evaluation of EPA's Workforce Capacity Efforts

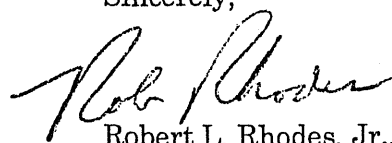
The Agency has developed its "Strategy for Human Capital: FY 2001 through FY 2003" which provides a fundamental direction for the management of EPA's workforce. It serves as the basis for the development of Agency-wide annual plans and allocation of resources to support OARM's overall priorities. The Council was asked to assess the Agency's efforts and related initiatives and help EPA to focus its strategic planning for human resource development in the right direction. The Council believes that:

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- The Strategy document needs tangible goals, goal-directed actions, and measures of progress toward attainment of the goals; and
- EPA leadership must ensure that human resource goals and priorities are integrated into the Agency's strategic planning process.

We look forward to providing more detailed and comprehensive recommendations, and would appreciate your response, as well as any additional guidance as NACEPT continues to address these issues.

Sincerely,



Robert L. Rhodes, Jr., Chair
National Advisory Council on Environmental
Policy and Technology

cc: W. Michael McCabe
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