

Dated: June 16, 2003.

Robert E. Roberts,

Regional Administrator, Region VIII.

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ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

[FRL-7516-6]

Science Advisory Board, Environmental Economics Advisory Committee, Advisory Panel on the Environmental Economics Research Strategy; Request for Nominations

AGENCY: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The EPA Science Advisory Board (SAB) is establishing a panel to review the EPA's Environmental Economics Research Strategy. The panel will consist of members of the EPA SAB Environmental Economics Advisory Committee (EEAC) to which will be added additional experts to constitute the Advisory Panel on the Environmental Economics Research Strategy (APEERS).

DATES: Nominations should be submitted no later than July 14, 2003.

ADDRESSES: Nominations should be submitted in electronic format through the Form for Nominating Individuals to Panels of the EPA Science Advisory Board provided on the SAB Web site, <http://www.epa.gov/sab>. To be considered, all nominations must include the information required on that form. Anyone who is unable to submit nominations via this form may contact Thomas O. Miller, Designated Federal Officer as indicated below.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Any member of the public wishing further information regarding this Request for Nominations may contact Thomas O. Miller, Designated Federal Officer (DFO), via telephone/voice mail at (202) 564-4558; or via e-mail at miller.tom@epa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Summary: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Science Advisory Board is establishing a panel to review EPA's Environmental Economics Research Strategy (EERS). The panel will consist of members of the SAB Environmental Economics Advisory Committee to which will be added experts to form the Advisory Panel on the Environmental Economics Research Strategy (APEERS). The Strategy draws together all relevant research needs of the EPA offices and

laboratories into an understandable framework for guiding EPA's research planning and implementation in this topical area.

The SAB was established by 42 U.S.C. 4365 to provide independent scientific and technical advice, consultation, and recommendations to the EPA Administrator on the technical basis for Agency positions and regulations. General information about the SAB can be found in the SAB Web site at <http://www.epa.gov/sab>.

The project the panel will undertake is expected to be no more than a six-month effort. Over that period, the panel will comply with the provisions of FACA and all appropriate SAB procedural policies, including the SAB process for panel formation described in the Overview of the Panel Formation Process at the Environmental Protection Agency Science Advisory Board, which can be found on the SAB's Web site at: <http://www.epa.gov/sab/pdf/ec02010.pdf>. Those selected to serve on the panel will review the draft materials identified in this notice and respond to the charge questions provided below. Upon completion, the panel's report will be submitted to the SAB Executive Committee for final approval.

Background: The EPA Science Advisory Board was asked by the National Center for Environmental Economics (NCEE) and the Office of Research and Development's National Center for Environmental Research (ORD/NCER) to review the EPA Environmental Economics Research Strategy.

The "Strategy" integrates together all relevant research conducted by EPA offices and laboratories and provides a blueprint for economic research priorities for the agency. The Strategy " * * identifies priorities and research gaps, evaluates research tools, sets out strategic research objectives and suggests responsibilities and sequences for conducting or sponsoring research." These research needs were developed from an initial survey of EPA economists who identified research topics for consideration. The top ten categories identified were: Valuation of reduced morbidity benefits; environmental behavior and decision-making; valuation of ecological benefits; benefits of environmental information disclosure; valuation of mortality benefits; market mechanisms and incentives other than trading; green accounting-international trade-finance; market mechanisms and incentives—trading; discounting-intergenerational equity; and risk and uncertainty techniques-integration with valuation. Research will be conducted externally

through cooperative agreements, grants, contracts, and internally at EPA's National Center for Environmental Economics and in relevant EPA Office of Research and Development (ORD) National Laboratories and Centers.

The identified research priorities were evaluated by EPA staff in relation to four criteria in order to select the areas that EPA would emphasize in its research program. The selection criteria used require that research must: be needed by EPA, state, or other clients; reflect a gap in the existing knowledge base (*i.e.*, not have been conducted already); be scientifically feasible and potentially of high quality; and be related to EPA's mission in a policy-relevant context and be able to come to conclusions on the topic within 5 to 10 years. The selected objectives for EPA's economics research focus, include: environmental (compliance) behavior and decision-making; benefits of environmental information disclosure; ecological valuation; health valuation; and market mechanisms and incentives. The Science Advisory Board Review Draft of EPA's research strategy for environmental economics can be found at the SAB's Web site at <http://www.epa.gov/sab/>.

Proposed Charge to the Panel: The following is the accepted charge that has been given to the Science Advisory Board by the Agency:

Charge Question 1: For each of the major subject areas described in the EERS, EPA has attempted to articulate the research questions most relevant to EPA that can be effectively addressed given the available tools and resources. In this context, please address the following for the key research questions identified in the EERS in each of the subject areas.

(a) Is the characterization of each of the major research gaps in the literature for the key subject areas of relevance to EPA's economic sciences, as identified in the EERS adequate? Will these priorities and implementation approaches effectively address the areas of greatest scientific uncertainty?

(b) Given the implementation strategy laid out in the EERS;

—To what extent is this research scientifically feasible at a high level of quality?

—How successful is this research likely to be in answering policy-relevant questions for EPA within the next 8–10 years?

(c) What improvements in the design and implementation of the EERS would make each research project more useful to EPA and other environmental management agencies?