

Although most States currently have water quality criteria that can be applied to manage SABS, these are typically based on turbidity, suspended solids or settleable solids, and their effectiveness for dealing with all water quality impairments caused by SABS, especially as benchmarks for aquatic life protection based on natural levels, is questionable. In recent consultation with State representatives, the need for new water quality criteria for SABS or methodologies for deriving them on a site-specific basis was identified as one of the highest priorities for the water quality criteria program. As a result, the EPA Office of Water has concluded that to better manage SABS in all types of water bodies and for all designated uses, State and Tribal water quality managers need new and updated water quality criteria and information for SABS.

The potential approaches for criteria development that EPA's Office of Water is considering investigating in the Strategy for Developing Water Quality Criteria for Suspended and Bedded Sediments (SABS) include the following:

- (1) State-by-State Reference Condition Criteria Derivation Approach;
- (2) Conditional Probability Approach to Establishing Thresholds;
- (3) Toxicological Dose-Response Approach;
- (4) Relative Bed Stability and Sedimentation Approach;
- (5) Rosgen Geomorphological Approach;
- (6) Water Body Use Functional Approach; and
- (7) Combinations of above approaches.

General information about water-quality criteria and water-quality standards can be found on the World Wide Web at <http://www.epa.gov/waterscience/standards/>. Information of obtaining a copy of the draft Strategy for Developing Water Quality Criteria for Suspended and Bedded Sediments will be provided at the time the formal meeting announcement is made for this consultation in September, or will be posted on the SAB Web site once the draft is provided to the SAB, whichever is earlier.

Proposed Charge to the Panel: While many questions and much research remain, EPA seeks the opportunity for a consultation with the Science Advisory Board to gain advice and recommendations on the best potential approaches to developing water quality criteria for suspended and bedded sediments as will be described in a draft *Strategy for Developing Water Quality Criteria for Suspended and Bedded Sediments (SABS)* to be prepared by the

Office of Water. The Office of Water is also seeking recommendations on additional criteria development approaches for uses of water bodies other than aquatic life, and it is also seeking advice on any potential criteria derivation methodology not included in the Strategy.

SAB Request for Nominations: The EPA SAB is requesting nominations of individuals who are recognized, national-level experts in one or more of the following disciplines to supplement the expertise of the EPEC for this consultation: (a) Fluvial hydrogeomorphology; (b) fluvial habitat dynamics; (c) sediment and turbidity monitoring; and (d) fisheries biology.

Process and Deadline for Submitting Nominations: Any interested person or organization may nominate qualified individuals to add expertise in the above areas for the panel for the consultation on the water quality strategy for suspended and bedded sediments.

Anyone who is unable to submit nominations in electronic format may contact Dr. L. Joseph Bachman at the mailing address given earlier in this notice under the heading **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**. Nominations should be submitted before August 20, 2003. Any questions concerning either this process or any other aspects of this notice should be directed to Dr. Bachman.

The EPA Science Advisory Board Staff Office will acknowledge receipt of nominations and inform nominators of the panel selected. From the nominees identified by respondents to this **Federal Register** notice (termed the "Widecast"), SAB Staff will develop a smaller subset (known as the "Short List") for more detailed consideration. Criteria used by the SAB Staff in developing this Short List are given at the end of the following paragraph. The Short List will be posted on the SAB Web site at <http://www.epa.gov/sab>, and will include, for each candidate, the nominee's name and their biosketch. Public comments will be accepted for 21 calendar days on the Short List. During this comment period, the public will be requested to provide information, analysis or other documentation on nominees that the SAB Staff should consider in evaluating candidates for the specific expertise to add to the panel for the consultation on the water quality strategy for suspended and bedded sediments.

For the EPA SAB, a balanced panel (*i.e.*, committee, subcommittee, or panel) is characterized by inclusion of candidates who possess the necessary domains of knowledge, the relevant

scientific perspectives (which, among other factors, can be influenced by work history and affiliation), and the collective breadth of experience to adequately address the charge. Public responses to the Short List candidates will be considered in the selection of the panel, along with information provided by candidates and information gathered by EPA SAB Staff Office independently on the background of each candidate (*e.g.*, financial disclosure information and computer searches to evaluate a nominee's prior involvement with the topic under review). Specific criteria to be used in evaluating an individual subcommittee or panel member include: (a) Scientific and/or technical expertise, knowledge, and experience (primary factors); (b) scientific credibility and impartiality; (c) availability and willingness to serve; (b) absence of financial conflicts of interest; and (e) ability to work constructively and effectively in committees.

Short List candidates will also be required to fill-out the "Confidential Financial Disclosure Form for Special Government Employees Serving on Federal Advisory Committees at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency" (EPA Form 3110-48). This confidential form, which is submitted by EPA SAB Members and Consultants, allows Government officials to determine whether there is a statutory conflict between that person's public responsibilities (which includes membership on an EPA Federal advisory committee) and private interests and activities, or the appearance of a lack of impartiality, as defined by Federal regulation. The form may be viewed and downloaded from the following URL address: <http://www.epa.gov/sab/pdf/epaform3110-48.pdf>. Panel members will be asked to attend one public meeting in late September or early October, 2003 in addition to reviewing background material and a proposed strategy document provided by EPA.

Dated: July 22, 2003.

Vanessa T. Vu,

Director, EPA Science Advisory Board Staff Office.

[FR Doc. 03-19276 Filed 7-29-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6560-50-P