

EPA Science Advisory Board Staff Office to accept written public comments of any length, and to accommodate oral public comments whenever possible. The EPA Science Advisory Board Staff Office expects that public statements presented at its meetings will not be repetitive of previously-submitted oral or written statements. *Oral Comments:* In general, for teleconference meetings, opportunities for oral comment will usually be limited to no more than three minutes per speaker and no more than fifteen minutes total for all speakers. The deadline for getting on the public speaker list for this teleconference is given above. Speakers who attend the teleconference in person should bring at least 35 copies of their comments and presentation slides for distribution to the reviewers and public at the meeting. *Written Comments:* Although the SAB Staff Office will accept written comments until the date of the teleconference (unless otherwise stated), written comments should be received in the SAB Staff Office at least one week prior to the meeting date so that the comments may be made available to the committee for their consideration. Comments should be supplied to the DFO at the address/contact information noted above in the following formats: one hard copy with original signature, and one electronic copy via e-mail (acceptable file format: Adobe Acrobat, WordPerfect, Word, or Rich Text files in IBM-PC/Windows 95/98 format). Those providing written comments and who attend the teleconference in person are also asked to bring 35 copies of their comments for public distribution.

Meeting Access. Individuals requiring special accommodation to access this teleconference, or who wish to attend this teleconference in person, should contact Mr. Butterfield at the telephone or e-mail address provided above at least five business days prior to the meeting so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

Dated: September 8, 2003.

Vanessa T. Vu,
Director, EPA Science Advisory Board Staff Office.

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ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

[FRL-7557-8]

Science Advisory Board Staff Office; Ecological Processes and Effects Committee; Notification of Public Advisory Committee Meeting; Consultation on EPA's Strategy on Suspended and Bedded Sediments; Discussion of EPEC Activities in Fiscal Year 2004

AGENCY: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Science Advisory Board Staff Office (SAB), Ecological Processes and Effects Committee (EPEC) will hold a face-to-face meeting to conduct a consultation on EPA's strategy for developing water-quality criteria for suspended and bedded sediments. In addition, EPEC members will discuss EPEC activities for fiscal year 2004.

DATES: The meeting will begin on Thursday, October 2, 2003, at 8:30 am (Eastern Time) and adjourn no later than 5:30 pm that day.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held in Washington, DC. Location of the meeting will be announced on the SAB Web site, <http://www.epa/sab>. For further information concerning the meeting, please contact Dr. L. Joseph Bachman (see contact information below).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Any member of the public wishing further information concerning this meeting must contact Dr. L. Joseph Bachman, Designated Federal Officer, USEPA Science Advisory Board Staff Office, (1400A), 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20460; telephone/voice mail at (202) 564-3968; fax at (202) 501-0582; or via e-mail at bachman.joseph@epa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: *Action:* Pursuant to the Federal Advisory Committee Act, Public Law 92-463, notice is hereby given that the Ecological Processes and Effects Committee (EPEC) of the U.S. EPA Science Advisory Board (SAB) will meet on Thursday October 2, to hold a consultation on EPA's strategy for developing water-quality criteria for suspended and bedded sediments. In addition, EPEC members will discuss possible EPEC activities for fiscal year 2004. The meeting is open to the public; however, seating is limited and available on a first come basis.

Availability of the Meeting Materials: Any meeting materials will be made

available from the EPA's Office of Water (OW) and the Office of Research Development (ORD). The proposed agenda for the meeting will be posted approximately 10 calendar days prior to the meeting at the SAB's Web site at <http://www.epa.gov/sab/panels/epecsabspanel.htm>. Links to available meeting materials will also be posted at this location. For questions and information concerning the agenda, please contact Dr. L. Joseph Bachman (see contact information above).

Background for Consultation on Suspended and Bedded Sediments

The Ecological Processes and Effects Committee (EPEC) of the EPA Science Advisory Board was asked by the Health and Ecological Criteria Division of the Office of Science and Technology, Office of Water, to provide a consultation on potential approaches on a strategy for developing water-quality criteria for Suspended and Bedded Sediments (SABS). A request for nominations for consultant panel members to provide additional expertise to EPEC appeared in the **Federal Register** on July 30, 2003 (68 FR 44758-44760). That request contained a more detailed description of the regulatory context of the SABS issue and the scientific approaches being considered in the strategy development.

In 1976, EPA issued a water quality criteria recommendation under the Clean Water Act for solids and turbidity. For a variety of reasons, the States seldom use this criterion. It is questionable whether this criterion would achieve intended protection for all different designated uses for water bodies. SABS occurs naturally in streams in a wide range of concentrations—levels that might be perfectly normal in one water body could be indicative of impairment in another.

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 consultations 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