

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

CLEAN AIR SUBCOMMITTEE

Conference Call Summary

Friday, August 28, 2009

1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. Eastern Time

Welcome

Dr. Kenneth Demerjian, Atmospheric Sciences Research Center, State University of New York, Subcommittee Chair

Dr. Demerjian, Chair of the Clean Air Subcommittee of the Board of Scientific Counselors (BOSC), welcomed Subcommittee members to the teleconference and thanked them for participating in the call. He stated that the purpose of this teleconference is to conduct a final review of the revised Clean Air Research Program Review Report. The call will focus on the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) content associated with pollutants other than particulate matter (PM) and ozone. He noted that many of the comments and edits submitted by Subcommittee members have been integrated into the current draft of the report.

Dr. Demerjian thanked the Subcommittee members for their contributions and efforts in preparing the report.

BOSC DFO Remarks

Ms. Heather Drumm, EPA/Office of Research and Development (ORD), Designated Federal Officer (DFO)

Ms. Drumm asked any ORD employees or any individuals from the public who had joined the teleconference to identify themselves for the record. She then reviewed Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) procedures, which are required for all BOSC Subcommittee meetings. All BOSC meetings and teleconferences involving substantive issues, whether in person, by phone, or by e-mail, which include one-half or more of the Subcommittee members, must be open to the public, and there must be an opportunity for public comment. Although no member of the public has requested time for comment, the public will have an opportunity for comment during this teleconference at 1:30 p.m.; public comments are limited to 3 minutes each. As the DFO, Ms. Drumm ensures that all FACA requirements are met and that records of the Subcommittee's deliberations are made available to the public. The minutes are being recorded by a contractor, Nanci Hemberger from The Scientific Consulting Group, Inc., who will prepare a summary of the meeting. Following review by the Subcommittee members and certification by the Chair, the summary will be made available to the public on the BOSC Web Site (<http://www.epa.gov/osp/bosc>). In accordance with FACA requirements, a notice of this conference call was posted in the *Federal Register*. The meeting materials can be accessed on the BOSC Web Site. Ms. Drumm has ensured that all appropriate ethics regulations have been satisfied, and she asked that Subcommittee members inform her if they discover a potential conflict of interest regarding any topics under discussion during this call.

Ms. Drumm stated that this conference call was convened to discuss the revised review report of the Clean Air Research Program. The report will be transmitted to the BOSC Executive Committee (EC) for review by two vetters; the report then will be discussed at the EC meeting scheduled for September 15, 2009.

Subcommittee Discussion

Dr. Kenneth Demerjian, Subcommittee Chair

Dr. Demerjian stated that he had received responses and approval from each Subcommittee member concerning the revised report with the exception of Mr. Bart Croes. Therefore, he suggested that Mr. Croes open the Subcommittee's discussion on the revised report. Mr. Croes said he had no outstanding issues or comments on the report but wanted to participate in the discussion regarding NAAQS.

Dr. Demerjian explained that substantive changes sent by Subcommittee members were highlighted in the current draft so that members could review these edits easily; he noted that most members have indicated their approval of the recent edits. Dr. Praveen Amar asked if most of the latest changes consisted primarily of text from one section of the draft report to another. Dr. Demerjian responded that in some cases text was, in fact, moved from one section to another; some material in the discussion section, for example, was moved to the Executive Summary. The highlighted sections of the draft, however, also include new material submitted by Subcommittee members. Dr. Demerjian noted that changes were made to the recommendations, and members may want to discuss these changes.

Dr. Demerjian then asked members for comments on the NAAQS-setting process for pollutants other than PM and ozone; he invited Mr. Henry (Dirk) Felton to begin the discussion.

Mr. Felton responded that although he understood the PM and ozone criteria, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standards for other pollutants are either unclear or lacking. He added that the Agency has not developed a consistent process for setting standards for other pollutants. Mr. Felton suggested adding text and a recommendation on page 8 at the end of the Relevance section concerning ORD support for facilitating the NAAQS-setting process for criteria pollutants other than PM and ozone. In addition, Mr. Felton questioned whether there is sufficient up-to-date published research to apply to NAAQS for non-PM/ozone pollutants. He suggested that members consider adding "the BOSC recommends that ORD provide reasonable targeted research programs to facilitate the NAAQS-setting process for all criteria pollutants." Dr. Jonathan Levy agreed and noted that his comments to Dr. Demerjian regarding "research that can be informative for the NAAQS-setting process would be of high value" overlapped with Mr. Felton's recommendation.

Dr. Rogene Henderson reminded members that the purpose of Long-Term Goal 1 (LTG1) is for the Clean Air Research Program to support the setting of the air standards; it is not necessary, therefore, to recommend that the Program support new processes for setting standards. She stressed that it is not the task of the review committee to set or to recommend NAAQS but rather to review the Clean Air Research Program. She agreed that because of budgetary constraints, ORD may not have provided adequate support for the NAAQS-setting process for non-PM and non-ozone pollutants; a recommendation to provide such support would be appropriate but only as funds allow. She added that she would be comfortable with Mr. Felton's recommendation that the Clean Air Research Program provide information to facilitate the standard-setting process for all criteria pollutants only if the text includes budgetary constraints as a consideration.

She recommended that if Mr. Felton does not agree with the proposed new rule for the primary standard for NAAQS, it may be more effective to communicate his concerns directly to the EPA Administrator. Dr. Henderson noted that she is a member of the Clean Air Science Advisory Committee (CASAC) panel currently reviewing NAAQS, and that the panel had reached a consensus that shorter term standards for NAAQS are appropriate.

Mr. Felton replied that the Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards (OAQPS) currently relies on studies from the early 1980s to support its proposal; he added that there have been no recently published studies provided by ORD that support EPA's decision on multi-pollutant standards. Dr. Henderson

acknowledged that this was a valid concern that should be addressed with the EPA Administrator rather than be included in the Subcommittee's review report. She again stressed that the role of the Subcommittee was to review the science of the Clean Air Research Program, not the Agency's standard-setting decisions. Dr. Amar suggested that the Subcommittee recommend a stronger link within EPA between ORD, which focuses on the science, and OAQPS, which focuses on standards.

Dr. Amar also proposed the following language concerning the criteria pollutant recommendation: "should ORD provide reasonable targeted research efforts to facilitate the NAAQS-setting process for all the criteria pollutants subject to research resources." Both Mr. Felton and Dr. Henderson agreed with Dr. Amar's suggested wording.

Mr. Croes remarked that the California Air Resources Board (CARB) has reviewed the NAAQS proposal thoroughly. CARB concluded that EPA based its standards on four primary papers, three of which were authored by EPA or funded through Science To Achieve Results (STAR) grants. He noted that three papers were published as recently as 2007, which indicates that EPA has supported the standard-setting process. Mr. Croes added that EPA currently balances non-PM and non-ozone research effectively; the Subcommittee recommendations regarding criteria pollutants hopefully will not divert funding from PM and ozone research.

Dr. Demerjian noted that standard-setting needs for the next air research program depend on effective communication between ORD and OAQPS. He suggested that the following text be included in the report: "The BOSC recommends that ORD provide reasonable targeted research programs in consultation with OAQPS to facilitate the NAAQS-setting process for all of the criteria pollutants subject to resource constraints." He added that although ORD consults with OAQPS, better communication will improve the overall standard-setting process. Dr. Demerjian next read revised text concerning improved communication between the offices, which he suggested be inserted on page 8, beginning with line 18 of the review report; he then solicited input from Subcommittee members. Dr. Henderson suggested shortening the edited text to avoid redundancy. Mr. Croes added that the extent of existing dialogue between ORD and OAQPS should be determined before recommending improved communication. Dr. Levy suggested that the Subcommittee emphasize that effective coordination between ORD and OAQPS will assist targeted research, particularly when resources are limited.

Dr. Demerjian asked Subcommittee members to consider the following three questions: (1) Does the Subcommittee want to include the recommendation concerning targeted research and the NAAQS-setting process for criteria pollutants? (2) If so, does the recommendation require text to support it? and (3) Does the recommendation belong in the Relevance section or in the LTG 1 section?

Several Subcommittee members noted that much of the proposed recommendation currently is included in the LTG 1 section of the draft report. Mr. Felton added that it is important to recommend a reasonable research program to address non-PM and non-ozone pollutants, which may be discovered through the shorter review cycles. Dr. Yarwood agreed that a clear statement about the need for criteria pollutant research should be included in the report. Dr. Levy added that the language in the LTG 1 section is retrospective and therefore differs from the recommendation text regarding targeted research and the NAAQS process, which is prospective and addresses future research.

Dr. Henderson observed that some Subcommittee members remain concerned that EPA has overlooked nitrogen oxide and other criteria pollutants. She suggested that language be added to the "Overall rating of LTG 1: Exceeds Expectations" paragraph on page 9 concerning the need for greater research efforts in the future aimed at pollutants other than PM and ozone. Mr. Felton agreed with Dr. Henderson but preferred that her suggestion also be included as a recommendation for future research. He added that sufficient information is needed in review documents to support other NAAQS, but because the review cycle is so short, it is difficult to gather enough relevant research for each review.

Dr. Demerjian noted that adding the suggested text at the end of the LTG 1 overall rating would add balance to the rating. Members agreed to include a recommendation that addresses EPA's obligation for additional research related to criteria pollutants while recognizing the impact of budgetary constraints. The recommendation also will acknowledge EPA's recent efforts and priorities in the area of air pollution sciences.

Dr. Dan Costa cautioned Subcommittee members about the use of the term "targeted research." He explained that although ORD frequently uses this term, its meaning differs considerably from its use in the review report, which could be misinterpreted by senior managers. "Focused research" may be more an appropriate term.

After discussion, Subcommittee members agreed to add the following sentence to the LTG 1 rating section: "However, in the future, additional issues may arise that will require more research effort from the Clean Air Research Program for other criteria pollutants." Members decided that a separate recommendation concerning future research for non-PM and non-ozone pollutants was unnecessary.

Public Comment

Ms. Heather Drumm, EPA/ORD, DFO

Ms. Drumm called for public comment at 1:45 p.m. No comments were offered.

Closing Comments

Dr. Demerjian thanked the Subcommittee members for their efforts and participation during the past several months. The Subcommittee members then thanked Dr. Demerjian for his leadership and help with preparing the report.

Dr. Costa also thanked the Subcommittee members and informed them that their comments are valuable to the National Health and Environmental Effects Research Laboratory (NHEERL) as the Clean Air Program moves forward.

Dr. Demerjian adjourned the teleconference at 1:50 p.m.

Action Items

- ✧ Dr. Henderson will send Dr. Demerjian the text that will be included in the rating section of LTG 1. Dr. Demerjian will review the language, make edits if necessary, and add it to the report.
- ✧ Mr. Croes will e-mail Dr. Demerjian his approval of the draft report.
- ✧ Dr. Demerjian will revise the report for submission to the BOSC Executive Committee for review at the September meeting.

PARTICIPANTS LIST

Subcommittee Members

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CONFERENCE CALL AGENDA

August 28, 2009

1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. Eastern Time

Participation by Teleconference Only

866-299-3188

code: 202-564-8239#

1:00–1:05 pm	Welcome - Overview of Agenda - Report Status	Dr. Ken Demerjian Clean Air Subcommittee Chair
	BOSC DFO Remarks	Ms. Heather Drumm, Office of Research and Development (ORD)
1:05-1:30 pm	Subcommittee Discussion	Clean Air Subcommittee
1:30–1:35 pm	Public Comment	
1:35–2:30 pm	Subcommittee Discussion	Clean Air Subcommittee
2:30 pm	Adjourn	

