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Comments may be sent by electronic mail (e-mail) to *a-and-r-Docket@epa.gov*, Attention Docket ID No. OAR-2003-0192. In contrast to EPA's electronic public docket, EPA's e-mail system is not an "anonymous access" system. If you send an e-mail comment directly to the Docket without going through EPA's electronic public docket, EPA's e-mail system automatically captures your e-mail address. E-mail addresses that are automatically captured by EPA's e-mail system are included as part of the comment that is placed in the official public docket, and made available in EPA's electronic public docket.

You may submit comments on a disk or CD ROM that you mail to the OEI Docket mailing address. These electronic submissions will be accepted in WordPerfect, Word, or ASCII file format. Avoid the use of special characters and any form of encryption.

If you provide comments in writing, please submit one unbound original with pages numbered consecutively, and three copies of the comments. For attachments, provide an index, number pages consecutively with the comments, and submit an unbound original and three copies.

Background

Many EPA programs are faced with deciding whether and how to regulate metals. These decisions range from site-specific assessments performed to determine, for example, whether a site needs remediation and, if so, to what degree; to national-scale assessments where, for example, national air and water quality standards are being developed; to national hazard or risk ranking conducted for purposes of setting priorities for future analysis, action, or information gathering. In recognition of the unique assessment issues raised by metals and the complexity of addressing these issues consistently across the Agency's various programs, an Agency workgroup, under the auspices of the Science Policy Council, is working to develop an integrated framework for metals risk assessment that will (1) foster consistent application of scientific principles for assessing the hazard and risk for metals, (2) reflect state-of-the-science application of methods and data, (3) incorporate a transparent process (*i.e.*

articulating assumptions and uncertainties), and (4) provide the flexibility to address program-specific issues. Issues discussed in these papers are focused on the inorganic species of metals and metal compounds.

Role of the Issue Papers

In September 2002, EPA discussed plans for the development of the metals assessment framework and associated guidance with the Agency's Science Advisory Board (SAB). That discussion included the context and key issues the Agency believed should be addressed in a metals assessment guidance and also identified the anticipated process for development of such guidance. In their review, the SAB expanded and condensed key technical areas into those represented by the five issue papers identified above. The SAB also emphasized the importance of engaging the outside community so as to contribute to the knowledge base the Agency would draw from in developing the subsequent guidance. As part of the effort to engage stakeholders and the scientific community and to build on existing experience, the Agency has commissioned external experts to lead the development of scientific papers on issues and state-of-the-art approaches to metals risk assessment. (Some individual EPA experts contributed specific discussions on topic(s) for which he or she has scientific expertise or knowledge of current Agency practice). Although Agency technical staff, as well as representatives from other Federal agencies reviewed and commented on previous drafts, the comments were addressed at the discretion of each respective author or group of authors. Therefore, the views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the EPA and should not be construed as implying EPA consent or endorsement. Comments of a technical nature received during the public comment period will be provided to Eastern Research Group for disposition by the authors.

Organizing Questions

For the purpose of organizing comments on the issue papers, the Agency suggests that commenters address the following questions:

1. For the purpose of deriving general principles that can be applied in the assessment of metals, do the issue papers provide an appropriate level of detail?
2. Are there additional chemical, biological and physical processes that should be considered for metals

assessment? If so, please describe and provide references.

3. Are you aware of any models, approaches or methods not considered in the reports that if implemented, would substantially reduce uncertainty in the Agency's metal assessments? If so, which ones are ready for application now (or in the next few years), and which types of assessments would benefit most from their application (*e.g.*, hazard ranking/characterization, national, or site-specific assessments)?

4. What other suggestions do you have to improve the utility of these papers as the Agency develops a metals assessment framework?

Dated: September 12, 2003.

Peter W. Preuss,

Director, National Center for Environmental Assessment.

[FR Doc. 03-24006 Filed 9-18-03; 12:01 pm]

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ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

[FRL-7562-3]

Notice of Extension of Public Comment Period on the Framework for Application of the Toxicity Equivalence Methodology for Polychlorinated Dioxins, Furans and Biphenyls in Ecological Risk Assessment (External Review Draft)

AGENCY: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

ACTION: Notice of extension of public comment period.

SUMMARY: This notice extends the comment period for the Framework for Application of the Toxicity Equivalence Methodology for Polychlorinated Dioxins, Furans and Biphenyls in Ecological Risk Assessment (External Review Draft). The availability of this document was originally announced in the **Federal Register** on July 30, 2003 (68 FR 44784).

DATES: Comments must be received by Wednesday, October 29, 2003.

ADDRESSES: The document is available via the Internet from <http://cfpub.epa.gov/ncea/raf/recordisplay.cfm?deid=55669>.

Instructions for submitting comments are provided in the July 30, 2003 **Federal Register** notice, which is accessible from this Web site.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. William P. Wood, Risk Assessment Forum (mail code 8601D), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20460, telephone 202-

564–3361, or send electronic mail inquiries to risk.forum@epa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In the July 30, 2003 *Federal Register* (68 FR 44784), EPA announced the availability of, and opportunity to comment on, the Framework for Application of the Toxicity Equivalence Methodology for Polychlorinated Dioxins, Furans, and Biphenyls in Ecological Risk Assessment (External Review Draft, June, 2003, EPA/630/R–03/002A). The comment period was scheduled to close on September 29, 2003. This notice extends the comment period until October 29, 2003. EPA will consider all comments received by this date in finalizing the document.

As announced in the *Federal Register* July 30, 2003, a panel of external experts, organized by Versar, Inc., a contractor to EPA, will review this document concurrent to the public comment period described in this notice.

Dated: September 10, 2003.

Peter W. Preuss,

Director, National Center for Environmental Assessment.

[FR Doc. 03–24005 Filed 9–18–03; 12:01 pm]

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ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

[OW–2003–0064, FRL–7562–5]

National Clean Water Act Recognition Awards; Presentation of Awards at the Water Environment Federation's Technical Exposition and Conference (WEFTEC), and Announcement of 2003 National Awards Winners.

AGENCY: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Environmental Protection Agency will recognize municipalities and industries for outstanding and innovative technological achievements in wastewater treatment and pollution abatement programs at the annual National Clean Water Act Recognition Awards Ceremony. An inscribed plaque will be presented at the Ceremony during the Water Environment Federation's Technical Exposition and Conference (WEFTEC) in Los Angeles, California. We are recognizing projects and programs for excellence in five awards categories including operations and maintenance at wastewater treatment facilities, biosolids management, pretreatment, storm water management, and combined sewer overflow controls. This action also announces the 2003 national awards winners.

DATES: Monday, October 13, 2003, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The national awards presentation ceremony will be held at the Los Angeles Convention Center, 1201 S. Figueroa Street, Los Angeles, California.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Maria E. Campbell, Telephone: (202) 564–0628. Facsimile Number: (202) 501–2396, or e-mail: campbell.maria@epa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The National Clean Water Act Recognition Awards program is authorized under Clean Water Act section 501 (a) and (e), 33 U.S.C. 1361(a) and (e). The awards program provides national recognition and heightens overall public awareness of programs developed to protect the public's health and safety and the

nation's water quality. A regulation at 40 CFR part 105 establishes a framework for the annual recognition awards program. EPA announced the availability of application and nomination information for this year's awards (68 FR 11858, March 12, 2003). State water pollution control agencies and EPA regional offices make recommendations to headquarters for the national awards. Programs being recognized are in compliance with applicable water quality requirements and have a satisfactory record with respect to environmental quality. Recognition is made for their demonstrated achievements in the awards program categories as follows:

- (1) Excellent operations and maintenance practices at wastewater treatment facilities;
- (2) Biosolids management through operating projects, and special biosolids management achievements;
- (3) Municipal implementation and enforcement of local pretreatment programs;
- (4) Storm Water Management excellence; and
- (5) Combined Sewer Overflow Control programs. The EPA's 2003 National Clean Water Act Recognition Awards winners are listed below by category.

	Sub-category
Operations and Maintenance Excellence Awards	
First Place:	
South Cobb Water Reclamation Facility, Mableton, Georgia	Large Advanced Plant.
Kalispell Advanced Wastewater Treatment Plant, Kalispell, Montana	Medium Advanced Plant.
Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe Wastewater Treatment Plant, Isabella Reservation, Mount Pleasant, Michigan	Small Advanced Plant.
Buckman Wastewater Treatment Facility, Jacksonville Electric Authority Jacksonville, Florida	Large Secondary Plant—tie.
Central Contra Costa Sanitary District, Martinez, California	Large Secondary Plant—tie.
Logan Township Municipal Utilities Authority, Bridgeport, New Jersey	Medium Secondary Plant.
Antrim Wastewater Treatment Facility, Antrim, New Hampshire	Small Secondary Plant.
Eielson Air Force Base Wastewater Treatment Facility, Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska	Large Non-discharging Plant.
Etowah Water and Sewer Authority, Dawsonville, Georgia	Small Non-discharging Plant.
Lisbon Wastewater Treatment Facility, Lisbon, New Hampshire	Most Improved Plant.
Second Place:	
Rockaway Valley Regional Sewerage Authority, Boonton, New Jersey	Large Advanced Plant.
New Canaan Water Pollution Control Facility, New Canaan, Connecticut	Medium Advanced Plant.
Village of Johnson Wastewater Treatment Facility, Johnson, Vermont	Small Advanced Plant.
Atlantic County Utilities Authority, Atlantic City, New Jersey	Large Secondary Plant.
South Kingstown Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility, Narragansett, Rhode Island	Medium Secondary Plant.
Town on Pine Bluffs Sewer, Pine Bluffs, Wyoming	Small Secondary Plant.
St. Joe-Spencerville Regional Sewer District, Saint Joe, Indiana	Most Improved Plant.