



CHAIRMAN

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

January 17, 2007

Dr. Robert M. Hirsch
Alternate Chair, Advisory Committee on Water Information
U.S. Geological Survey
12201 Sunrise Valley Drive, MS 409
Reston, VA 20192

Dear Dr. Hirsch:

On behalf of the Cabinet Committee on Ocean Policy (COP), I would like to thank you for your efforts in helping to create a National Water Quality Monitoring Network. The President's Ocean Action Plan highlighted the need for such a Network and requested the Advisory Committee on Water Information (ACWI), through the National Water Quality Monitoring Council, to provide advice and recommendations regarding the Network's design and creation. The Network design document, which was formally approved by ACWI in April 2006, included a recommendation for one or more Pilot Studies.

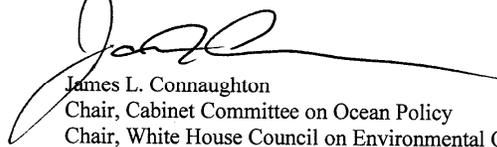
The COP deputies committee, the Interagency Committee on Ocean Science and Resource Management Integration (ICOSRMI), agreed to move forward with the development of Pilot Studies, and has developed a tasking statement (attached). As currently envisioned, the Pilot Studies will include an inventory of water-quality monitoring in the pilot study areas; will contribute to an improved Network design, based on local and regional expertise and issues; and lay the foundation for improved communication and data sharing among those participating in the Pilot Studies and with the broader monitoring community. The target date for completing the pilot study phase is January 2008.

Although the tasking statement specifically charges EPA, NOAA, and USGS with overall responsibility for coordinating the Pilot Studies, we believe that participation by ACWI, a broadly-based group representing both Federal and non-Federal interests, will strengthen the Pilot effort. Therefore, I am requesting ACWI take the necessary steps to provide advice and recommendations on the development of the Pilot Phase of the National Water Quality Monitoring Network for U.S. Coastal Waters and their Tributaries. Involvement of multiple representatives of the water-quality monitoring community, through ACWI's Monitoring Council, will further strengthen communication and collaboration.

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact Dr. Dan Walker, Office of Science and Technology Policy (202-456-6137) or Dr. Gerhard Kuska, Council on Environmental Quality (202-456-3892).

Thank you for your continuing assistance in this effort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Connaughton', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

James L. Connaughton
Chair, Cabinet Committee on Ocean Policy
Chair, White House Council on Environmental Quality