



**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON D.C. 20460**

**Office of
Water**

July 3 2002

DESK STATEMENT

EPA STATEMENT ON NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES REPORT ON SEWAGE SLUDGE

Environmental Protection Agency officials are reviewing the report "Biosolids Applied to Land: Advancing Standards and Practices" prepared by The National Academies' Board on Environmental Studies and Toxicology. In the fall of 2000, the Agency requested the Academies conduct an independent evaluation of the appropriateness of the risk assessment methods and data used by EPA to set standards for chemical and pathogens standards in biosolids (treated sewage sludge) applied to land.

While this report indicates there is uncertainty about the potential for adverse health effects, it does find that there is no documented scientific evidence that biosolids applied to lands in accordance with EPA's sewage sludge regulations are a threat to public health.

The Agency believes existing standards adequately protect public health but also shares the Academy's view that additional scientific research and data gathering would be helpful.

While the Agency has ongoing research to provide additional scientific insight into pathogens, potential exposure to pathogens, and improved monitoring techniques, the Academy's report highlights the need for additional cutting-edge science to reduce uncertainties associated with the current standards.

The Agency is committed to an open process and will seek public comments on its response to this report as well as give immediate consideration to recommendations during the Agency's current budget planning process.

Pam Grant
Office of Water
Phone: 202/564-5777