



STAFF MEMO

Robin Johnson

October 25, 1978

TO: OTA Staff
FROM: Russ Peterson
SUBJECT: Public Participation

As you know, one of my objectives as Director of OTA is to increase the level of effort of our public participation program. Over the past few months, a number of questions have arisen regarding the actual implementation of this policy. I have asked Bob Niblock and Nancy Shirk to monitor this program and suggest to me, on a continuing basis, ways in which our performance can be improved. They have recommended to me, and I have authorized, two special activities for the week of November 6. These activities are a training course on public participation and a staff workshop.

I. Management of Public Participation - Training Course
November 6, 1:00 - 5:00 p.m., and November 7, 9:00 - 5:30.

Up to 24 people may participate, and I hope that each group will be represented. Project Leaders and those with specific responsibility for public participation should attend. Nancy and Bob will be meeting with Group Managers this week to help compile the attendance list. Participants will be asked to commit their time for the entire course, so that continuity and concentration can be maintained.

Topics will include: goals and limits for citizen participation; alternative methods; identification of "the public"; formats for documenting and using public input in an assessment; developing management plans for participation; and special problem areas.

The course will be conducted by Nea and Wally Toner, of Toner and Associates, Seattle, Washington. The Toner firm has extensive experience in direct public involvement work, and in training. They have acted as consultants for the decision-making process component of many major projects, in the areas of highways and mass transit, land use, energy, water quality, recreation, and education. A resume of the principals is available in the library. Please see Nancy or Bob for more information.

II. Staff Workshop
Wednesday, November 8, 9:30 - 11:30 a.m.

This meeting is designed to accomplish two purposes. One is to share with the full staff some of the learning experience of the training course. The second is to try and define more clearly what role public involvement will play in assessments. This will include methods for considering the extent of social impact and ways to deal with non-technical information. Information on OTA experience in public involvement will be shared, along with information on available resources. I hope that everyone can attend.