

Science News for March 30, 1985 (Vol. 127, No. 13), carries word of the finding by the President's Council on Environmental Quality that data from networks monitoring U.S. environmental quality are "not very good."

A Washington-based consultant, Richard M. Dowd, formerly an assistant administrator of EPA, participated in a recently completed study by CEQ, analyzing "how to remedy deficiencies in data on the health of the environment and challenges to that health."

At a news briefing in late March, A. Alan Hill, CEQ chairman, pledged that he would work with other federal agencies to see that the report's long list of recommendations is implemented. The recommendations were distilled from the findings of four expert panels on human health impacts, geochemical and hydrological processes, ecosystems, and environ-

mental monitoring and assessment.

A key concern was monitoring. The study found that for many environmental indicators, little or no monitoring data exist. Panelists also worried that most data come from short-term experiments that “probably do not reflect the real and complex biochemical and physical ways an ecosystem would respond to stress. Recommendations include the inventorying of all federal monitoring programs and the identifying of specially sensitive species (such as bees, worms, or lichens) as early-warning sentinels of hazards.