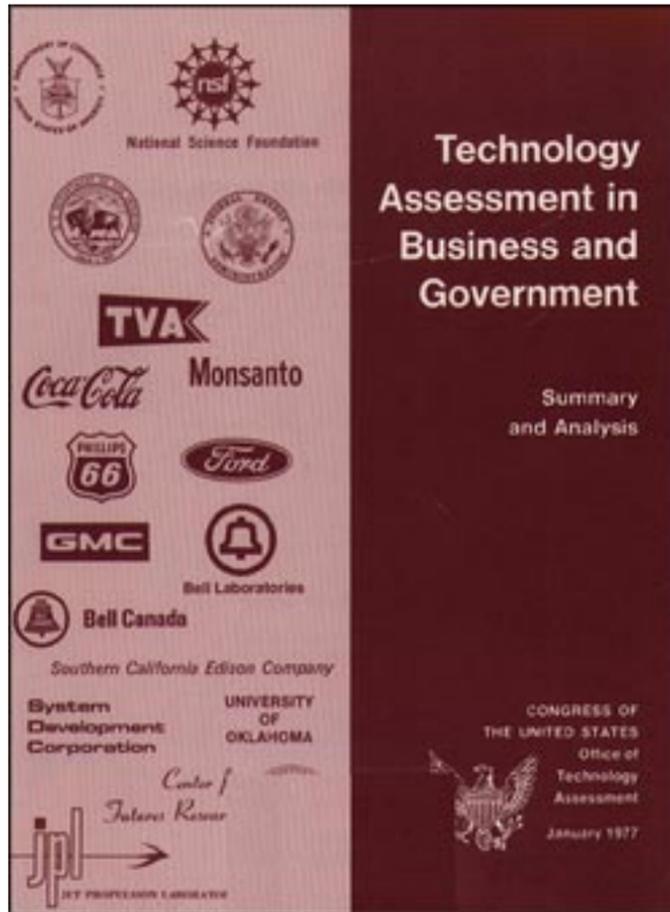


*Technology Assessment in Business and
Government*

January 1977

NTIS order #PB-273164



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December 30, 1976

The Honorable Olin E. Teague
Chairman
Technology Assessment Board
Office of Technology Assessment
Congress of the United States
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Teague:

I am transmitting for the use and distribution by the Technology Assessment Board, the Summary and Analysis and the Hearing Record of the hearings on "Technology Assessment Activities in the Industrial, Academic, and Governmental Communities." I appreciated the opportunity to chair these hearings, which directly relate to the activities and responsibilities of the Technology Assessment Board.

As the Summary and Analysis makes amply clear, the technology assessment process is still evolving, as is the role of technology assessment in society. The role of Government, and that of the Congress in particular, is also evolving and growing--a fact that industry witnesses unhesitatingly noted. As Harvey Brooks stated in a recent address,

"One has only to mention auto safety, consumer product safety, pesticide regulation, the clean air amendments, the water pollution control act, the occupational health and safety act, the creation of the Nuclear Regulatory Agency, and so on down the line. All of these pieces of legislation require what amounts to more or less elaborate technology assessments prior to any positive action to permit the application of technology, either in general or with respect to a specific project, such as a dam or a nuclear power plant, or even a specific regulatory action."

The Office of Technology Assessment is in a position to conduct or analyze many of these technology assessments. Based upon these hearings, and other evidence, I believe that the technology assessment process can help decision makers--in Congress and elsewhere--avoid serious problems that might arise without the availability of such analytical tools. In particular, I believe the Congress would benefit from greater exposure to technology assessments,

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Honorable Olin E. Teague
December 30, 1976

and similar analytical approaches. A recent editorial in the Christian Science Monitor makes this point especially well, citing one particular example,

"Congress' Office of Technology Assessment has raised a needed warning on offshore energy-related development--drilling for oil, building deep water ports for supertankers, and the unprecedented floating of nuclear power plants."

"We welcome the warning. The country has been asleep to the fact that the kind of offshore energy-related development likely in the future will be totally different in its impact from any the United States has had in the past."

"We are entering a new era of extensive offshore development in legal disarray and short on foresight. The OTA has rendered an important service in blowing the whistle on what could become another unplanned environmental disaster."

The Technology Assessment Board is an ideal body to foster this wider Congressional awareness, and should do so through the tools available to it. Among the activities I would recommend are board hearings on major technology assessments, whether they are done by the Office of Technology Assessment, or by some other entity.

In conclusion, I am satisfied that the utility and acceptance of technology assessments is great enough to warrant our further encouragement of the process both in and out of Government. Because of the high visibility of the Office of Technology Assessment in this field, any new efforts by the Technology Assessment Board would likely have a significant and positive impact.

Member, Technology Assessment Board

GEB :tl: pi

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December 30, 1976

The Honorable Olin E. Teague
Chairman of the Board
Office of Technology Assessment
U. S. Congress
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The attached report, Technology Assessment in Business and Government, is a summary and analysis of OTA's June 1976 hearings, which were held to explore the practices and uses of technology assessments and how they are influencing decision making in industry, government, and other sectors. The complete record of these hearings, Technology Assessment Activities in the Industrial, Academic, and Governmental Communities, has been published separately.

The hearings were held at the request of Representative George E. Brown, Jr., OTA Board Member. As you know, a preliminary summary and analysis document was made available by Mr. Brown at the September 14, 1976, Board meeting.

This summary and analysis volume highlights important findings discussed in the hearings. These findings in brief are as follows:

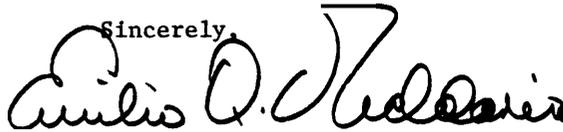
1. Technology assessment is an evolving study strategy that is being widely adopted by the public and private sectors.
2. The strategy of any particular TA should be tailor-made to fit the resources, timing, and needs of the decision makers.
3. In addition to identifying and exploring options and alternatives, TA can provide early warning of unanticipated consequences.
4. Management in both government and industry is finding it increasingly necessary to comprehend the intermediate and long-term effects of technology. In both sectors, there is a growing awareness of TA's value for improving the policy-making process and broadening the information base for decision making.

5. Technology assessment is being employed at major corporations as a useful planning tool, in addition to informing the policy-making process.

6. Communication among the assessment team members; with potential users, sponsors, and decision makers; and with affected parties in the public sector, is essential for producing an effective technology assessment.

These hearings were a very useful step toward developing closer communication links and exchanging information between the public and private sectors on technology assessment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Emilio Q. Daddario". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "E" and "D".

EMILIO Q. DADDARIO

Director

Enclosures.

PREFACE

The Office of Technology Assessment held 4 days of hearings, June 8, 9, 10, and 14, 1976, on the status of technology assessment activities in the public and private sectors. The hearings were chaired by the Honorable George E. Brown, Jr., of California, a Member of the Technology Assessment Board. Representative Brown, in his letter of May 14, 1975, requested that the "Technology Assessment Board hold hearings on the status of technology assessment. . . The 1974 Hearings,* Technology Assessment Activities of the National Science Foundation, held by the Board, began the process of developing the record on technology assessment, but this was clearly only a beginning. I believe hearings on broad aspects of technology assessment would be useful to the Congress and the country. " The Board gave final approval to his request at its March 16, 1976 meetings.

The hearings were planned and organized by Mr. Dennis F. Miller and Mr. John Davis. Staff support was given by Mr. Joseph F. Coates, Assistant to the Director; Ms. Renee Ford, consultant; and Ms. Goldie Hallas; secretary. Special thanks are due other staff members who gave advice and assistance on this project,

This document is a summary and analysis of the Hearings Record. The second volume contains the Hearings Record.

* These hearings were held on June 12, 1974. Under the terms of the Technology Assessment Act of 1972 (P.L. 92-484, Sec. 10(a) (1) and (2)), the Office is required to maintain a liaison with the National Science Foundation and to review its technology assessment (TA) program. The purpose of this review is two-fold, to promote the coordination of TA research in order to minimize unnecessary duplication, and to promote the development of TA programs and techniques.