

May 2006

**Instructions for Peer Review of U.S. Climate Change Science Program (CCSP) Synthesis and Assessment Product (SAP) 2.2**

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the review of: *CCSP 2.2 The First State of the Carbon Cycle Report (SOCCR): The North American Carbon Budget and Implications for the Global Carbon Cycle*. Your review of the document is very much appreciated and vital to ensure the integrity of the final report and the success of the U.S. Climate Change Science Program.

**A. The Review**

In your review, please focus on: 1) the chapter you were nominated to review, as noted in the letter of invitation, and, 2) other parts of the document, as your time and expertise may allow. You can access the full report and/or each chapter separately from the following website: <http://www.climate.noaa.gov/index.jsp?pg=./ccsp/22.jsp>.

We ask that you use the following questions as a guide in your review:

- Are the scope and intent of the synthesis and assessment product clearly described in the report? Are all aspects of this charge fully addressed? Do the authors go beyond this charge or their expertise?
- Are the conclusions and recommendations adequately supported by evidence, analysis, and argument?
- Are uncertainties or incompleteness in the evidence explicitly recognized?
- Are the data and analyses handled competently? Are statistical methods applied appropriately?
- Are the report's exposition and organization effective? Is the title appropriate?
- Is the report fair and appropriately balanced?
- Is the report's tone impartial and devoid of special pleading?
- Are any of the report's findings based on value judgments or the collective opinions of the authors? If so, is this acknowledged, and are scientifically defensible reasons given for reaching those judgments?
- Does the executive summary concisely and accurately describe the key findings and recommendations? Is it consistent with the other sections of the report?
- What other significant improvements, if any, might be made in the report?

Please prepare your review using word processing software (e.g. Microsoft Word, text file, etc.). As a reminder, the complete set of expert reviews will be made publicly available. Your review comments will be compiled with those of the other reviewers and individual comments will not be attributed to individual reviewers. In addition, reviewers will be identified for the document as a whole, not by chapter.

**B. Additional items:**

1. Please complete the enclosed conflict of interest form. This includes attaching a copy of your curriculum vitae. For your information, this form is derived from the U.S. National Academy of Sciences Policy on Conflict of Interest.
2. Because your identity and credentials as a reviewer will be made publicly available, we ask that you enclose a short biographical paragraph citing your credentials qualifying you as a reviewer of this report; this will ensure that the paragraph appears according to your

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preferences. An example biographical paragraph is included below for your reference.

Please submit your short biographical paragraph and the review electronically to Krisa Arzayus ([krisa.arzayus@noaa.gov](mailto:krisa.arzayus@noaa.gov)) no later than *June 30, 2006*. Please fax your completed and signed conflict of interest form to my attention at 301-713-0158 or mail it to the following address:

Krisa Arzayus  
DOC/NOAA/OAR  
Office of Policy, Planning, and Evaluation  
Planning & Transition Team (R/PPEx2)  
1315 East West Highway  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Thank you, again, for your participation in this review.

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**Sample Biography (all fictitious)**

**Dr. John Doe**

Professor

State University

3010 University Hall

Anytown, USA 01234

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(515) 123-4567 Phone

(515) 123-4567 Fax

Dr. Doe received his B.A. degree in Physics and Mathematics from Luther College in 1968 and his Ph.D. in Solid State Physics from the State University in 1973. He is Professor of Atmospheric Science in the Department of Geological and Atmospheric Sciences and Professor of Agricultural Meteorology in the Department of Agronomy at State University. His research involves regional climate modeling with emphasis on plant-soil-atmosphere interactions. He has approximately 150 publications and conference presentations relating to atmospheric modeling and measurements at the regional and micro-scale. He is co-director of the Project to Intercompare Model Simulations (PIMS), an international consortium of modelers seeking to advance the quality of regional modeling, and chair of the Working Group of the Water Modelers Panel of the International Climate Research Organization, which promotes regional climate modeling for the purpose of better understanding water and energy cycles.

**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**  
**Policy on Conflicts of Interest**  
**For Peer Review Subject to OMB's Peer Review Bulletin**

**Introduction**

In December 2004, the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued a Final Information Quality Bulletin for Peer Review (Bulletin) establishing minimum peer review standards, a transparent process for public disclosure of peer review planning, and opportunities for public participation. The OMB Bulletin, implemented under the Information Quality Act (Public Law 106-554), is intended to enhance the quality and credibility of the federal government's scientific information, and applies to influential scientific information disseminated on or after June 16, 2005.

The Bulletin directs federal agencies to adopt or adapt the National Academy of Sciences' (NAS) policy for committee selection with respect to evaluating conflicts of interest<sup>1</sup> when selecting peer reviewers who are not federal government employees<sup>2</sup>. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has adapted the NAS conflict of interest policy as set forth below.

**Conflict of Interest Policy**

It is essential that individuals serving as peer reviewers of influential scientific information or highly influential scientific assessments that NOAA intends to disseminate not be compromised by any significant conflict of interest. For this purpose, **the term "conflict of interest" means any financial or other interest which conflicts with the service of the individual on the review panel because it (1) could significantly impair the individual's objectivity or (2) could create an unfair competitive advantage for any person or organization.** Except for those situations in which NOAA determines that a conflict of interest is unavoidable and promptly and publicly discloses the conflict of interest, no individual can be appointed to review documents subject to the OMB Bulletin if that individual has a conflict of interest that is relevant to the functions to be performed.

**General Principles**

***Involves an Interest***

The term "conflict of interest" means something more than individual bias. There must be an *interest*, ordinarily financial, that could be directly affected by the work of the peer reviewers.

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<sup>1</sup> The NAS Policy on Committee Composition and Balance and Conflicts of Interest can be found at: <http://www.nationalacademies.org/coi/index.html>

<sup>2</sup> Peer reviewers who are federal employees must comply with applicable federal ethics requirements.

Conflict of interest requirements are objective and preventive. They are not an assessment of one's actual behavior or character, one's ability to act objectively despite the conflicting interest, or one's relative insensitivity to particular dollar amounts of specific assets because of one's personal wealth. Conflict of interest requirements are objective standards designed to eliminate certain specific, potentially compromising situations from arising, and thereby protect the individual, other peer reviewers, NOAA, and the public interest. The individual, the other peer reviewers, and NOAA should not be placed in a situation where the findings and conclusions of a review could be reasonably questioned, and perhaps discounted or dismissed, simply because of the existence of conflicting interests.

### ***Applies Only to Current Interests***

The term "conflict of interest" applies only to *current interests*. It does not apply to past interests that have expired, no longer exist, and cannot reasonably affect current behavior. Nor does it apply to possible interests that may arise in the future but do not currently exist, because such future interests are inherently speculative and uncertain. For example, a pending formal or informal application for a particular job is a current interest, but the mere possibility that one might apply for such a job in the future is not a current interest.

### ***Potentially Affects the Interests of Others***

The term "conflict of interest" applies not only to the personal financial interests of the individual but also to the *interests of others* with whom the individual has substantial common financial interests if these interests are relevant to the functions to be performed. Thus, in assessing an individual's potential conflicts of interest, consideration must be given not only to the interests of the individual but also to the interests of the individual's spouse and minor children, the individual's employer, the individual's business partners, and others with whom the individual has substantial common financial interests. Consideration must also be given to the interests of those for whom one is acting in a fiduciary or similar capacity (e.g., being an officer or director of a corporation, whether profit or nonprofit, or serving as a trustee).

### ***Covers a Broad Range of Financial Interests***

The term "conflict of interest" as used herein ordinarily refers to *financial* conflicts of interest. In assessing potential conflicts of interest in connection with an individual's service as a peer reviewer, particular attention will be given to the following kinds of *financial interests* if they are relevant to the functions to be performed:

- Employment relationships (including private and public sector employment and self-employment).
- Consulting relationships (including commercial and professional consulting and service arrangements, scientific and technical advisory board memberships, and serving as an expert witness in litigation).
- Stocks, bonds, and other financial instruments and investments including partnerships.
- Real estate investments; patents, copyrights, and other intellectual property interests.

- Commercial business ownership and investment interests.
- Service provided in exchange for honorariums and travel expense reimbursements.
- Research funding and other forms of research support.
- Financial ties to entities regulated by NOAA, other stakeholders and NOAA itself.

### ***Limits Access to Confidential Information***

During the course of peer review activity for NOAA, the opportunity to have access to confidential information, if abused or misused, may confer an unfair competitive advantage. If an individual during the course of participating in a peer review for NOAA obtains and uses, or intends to use, confidential information not reasonably available to the public for the individual's own direct and substantial economic benefit, such conduct constitutes a conflict of interest. The same rule applies if the individual discloses, or intends to disclose, such information (albeit lawfully) to other individuals or to organizations in such a manner that a direct and substantial economic benefit may be conferred on such individuals or organizations. These restrictions do not apply to information once it has entered the public domain.

In some situations – for example, access to confidential or proprietary information, – special limitations on access to and use of such information will be imposed. Substantial legal penalties may apply for noncompliance. In addition, an individual employed by or associated with a particular organization or enterprise should not be given access to proprietary information of a competitor or potential competitor unless appropriate safeguards have been established that reasonably protect the interests of all parties. Otherwise, such access may create an unfair competitive advantage, as well as possible liability for improper disclosure and use. For further guidance regarding access to confidential information, contact the NOAA Office of the General Counsel.

### ***Limits Reviews of One's Own Work***

It is not uncommon for individuals serving as peer reviewers to find that their own published and professional work, in common with others in the field, is part of the technical basis and literature for the information being reviewed. This ordinarily would not constitute a conflict of interest. However, an individual should not serve as a peer reviewer when a critical review and evaluation of the individual's own work, or that of his or her immediate employer, is a central purpose of the review, because that would constitute a conflict of interest, although such an individual may provide relevant information to the peer reviewers.

### ***Public Statements and Positions***

An individual may have become committed to a fixed position on a particular issue through public statements (e.g., testimony, speeches, interviews), through publications (e.g., articles, books), through close identification or association with the positions or perspectives of a particular group, or through other personal or professional activities. This would ordinarily constitute a potential source of bias but not a conflict of interest. However, in situations where there is some significant, directly related interest or duty of the individual – e.g., where the

individual is currently president of a professional society that espouses the same fixed position on the issue – the situation may constitute a conflict of interest.

### **Implementation of this Conflict of Interest Policy**

#### ***Requires Background Information and Confidential Conflict of Interest Disclosures***

To address questions of conflict of interest, individuals selected to perform peer review of scientific information subject to the OMB Bulletin are required to submit certain background information and information regarding conflicts of interest to NOAA (or the entity commissioned by NOAA to manage the peer review process) for review. NOAA has developed a “Background Information and Confidential Conflict of Interest Disclosure” form for this purpose.

The disclosure of relevant information is a *continuing obligation* for the duration of the peer review process for which the “Background Information and Confidential Conflict of Interest Disclosure” form was prepared. If during an individual’s period of service as a peer reviewer it becomes apparent to the individual that there has been a change in the information disclosed, or that there is new information that needs to be disclosed, such information must be reported promptly to NOAA or the entity commissioned by NOAA to manage the peer review process.

Except as otherwise provided herein, specific conflict of interest information obtained by NOAA, or the entity commissioned by NOAA to manage the peer review process, from the “Background Information and Confidential Conflict of Interest Disclosure” form, from amended disclosures, and from the public and other sources will be held in confidence by NOAA. Access to such information within NOAA will be limited to those offices whose proper business requires access to that information. Such information will not be released by NOAA, or the entity commissioned by NOAA to manage the peer review process, except with the approval of the individual to whom the information pertains, unless release is required by law.

#### ***Requires Public Notice***

For peer reviews of information subject to the OMB Bulletin, NOAA will disclose the names of the reviewers and their affiliation in a report of findings and conclusions prepared by the peer reviewers. The report will be posted on the Department of Commerce Information Quality web site ([http://www.osec.doc.gov/cio/oipr/info\\_qual.html](http://www.osec.doc.gov/cio/oipr/info_qual.html)). For peer review of highly influential scientific assessments, the report will also include the credentials and relevant experiences of each peer reviewer. Reviewers shall be notified in advance regarding the extent of disclosure and attribution planned by the agency.

#### ***Uses Background Information to Make Determinations on Conflicts of Interest***

Information obtained from the “Background Information and Confidential Conflict of Interest Disclosure” forms and from other sources, including the public, will be used by NOAA in addressing and resolving questions of conflict of interest. Except for those situations in which the agency determines that a conflict of interest is unavoidable and promptly and publicly

discloses the conflict of interest, no individual can be appointed to serve (or continue to serve) as a peer reviewer for NOAA of information subject to the OMB Bulletin if the individual has a conflict of interest that is relevant to the peer review to be performed.

A particular individual's conflict of interest may be determined to be unavoidable if, for example, the individual's qualifications, knowledge, and experience are particularly valuable to the peer review in question and the agency is unable to identify another individual with comparable qualifications, knowledge, and experience who does not also have a conflict of interest. Determinations that a conflict of interest exists and that a conflict of interest is unavoidable are made jointly by the NOAA office managing the peer review (or commissioning the entity to manage the peer review) and the NOAA General Counsel's office.



National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

CONFIDENTIAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE  
For General Scientific and Technical Studies and Assistance

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CURRENT EMPLOYER: \_\_\_\_\_

PEER REVIEW SUBJECT: The First State of the Carbon Cycle Report (SOCCR): The North American Carbon Budget and Implications for the Global Carbon Cycle

INSTRUCTIONS

**Please complete this form, sign and date it on the last page, attach a copy of your curriculum vitae, and return the form to the NOAA Office coordinating the peer review process. Retain a copy for your records.**

It is essential that peer reviewers of NOAA influential scientific information or highly influential scientific assessments not be compromised by any significant conflict of interest. For this purpose, **the term "conflict of interest" means any financial or other interest which conflicts with the service of the individual because it (1) could significantly impair the individual's objectivity or (2) could create an unfair competitive advantage for any person or organization.** Except for those situations in which NOAA determines that a conflict of interest is unavoidable and promptly and publicly discloses the conflict of interest, no individual can be appointed to review information subject to the OMB Peer Review Bulletin if the individual has a conflict of interest that is relevant to the functions to be performed.

The term "conflict of interest" means something more than individual bias. There must be an *interest*, ordinarily financial, that could be directly affected by the work of the peer reviewers.

Conflict of interest requirements are objective and preventive. They are not an assessment of one's actual behavior or character, one's ability to act objectively despite the conflicting interest, or one's relative insensitivity to particular dollar amounts of specific assets because of one's personal wealth. Conflict of interest requirements are objective standards designed to eliminate

certain specific, potentially compromising situations from arising, and thereby protect the individual, other peer reviewers, NOAA, and the public interest. The individual, the other peer reviewers, and NOAA should not be placed in a situation where the findings and conclusions of a review could be reasonably questioned, and perhaps discounted or dismissed, simply because of the existence of conflicting interests.

The term "conflict of interest" applies only to *current interests*. It does not apply to past interests that have expired, no longer exist, and cannot reasonably affect current behavior. Nor does it apply to possible interests that may arise in the future but do not currently exist, because such future interests are inherently speculative and uncertain. For example, a pending formal or informal application for a particular job is a current interest, but the mere possibility that one might apply for such a job in the future is not a current interest.

The term "conflict of interest" applies not only to the personal interests of the individual but also to the *interests of others* with whom the individual has substantial common financial interests if these interests are relevant to the functions to be performed. Thus, in assessing an individual's potential conflicts of interest, consideration must be given not only to the interests of the individual but also to the interests of the individual's spouse and minor children, the individual's employer, the individual's business partners, and others with whom the individual has substantial common financial interests. Consideration must also be given to the interests of those for whom one is acting in a fiduciary or similar capacity (e.g., being an officer or director of a corporation, whether profit or nonprofit, or serving as a trustee).

The overriding objective of the conflict of interest inquiry in each case is to identify whether there are interests – primarily financial in nature – that conflict with the individual's review because they could impair the individual's objectivity or could create an unfair competitive advantage for any person or organization. The fundamental question in each case is does the individual, or others with whom the individual has substantial common financial interests, have identifiable interests that could be directly affected by the use of the peer reviewer's findings and conclusions regarding the scientific information being reviewed?

The application of these concepts to this review for potential conflicts of interest must necessarily be addressed in each case on the basis of the particular facts and circumstances involved. The questions set forth below are designed to elicit information from you concerning possible conflicts of interest that are relevant to the functions to be performed in the course of the peer review in which you have been asked to serve.

## 1. FINANCIAL INTERESTS

(a) Taking into account stocks, bonds, and other financial instruments and investments including partnerships (but excluding broadly diversified mutual funds and any investment or financial interests valued at less than \$10,000), do you or, to the best of your knowledge, others with whom you have substantial common financial interests, have financial investments that could be affected, either directly or by a direct effect on the business enterprise or activities underlying the investments, by the findings and conclusions that you would prepare as a peer reviewer?

(b) Taking into account real estate and other tangible property interests, as well as intellectual property (patents, copyrights, etc.) interests, do you or, to the best of your knowledge, others with whom you have substantial common financial interests, have property interests that could be directly affected by the findings and conclusions that you would prepare as a peer reviewer?

(c) Could your employment or self-employment (or the employment or self-employment of your spouse), or the financial interests of your employer or clients (or the financial interests of your spouse's employer or clients) be directly affected by the findings and conclusions that you would prepare as a peer reviewer?

(d) Taking into account research funding and other research support (e.g., equipment, facilities, industry partnerships, research assistants and other research personnel, etc.), could your current research funding and support (or that of your close research colleagues and collaborators) be directly affected by the findings and conclusions that you would prepare as a peer reviewer?

(e) Could your service as a peer reviewer create a specific financial or commercial competitive advantage for you or others with whom you have substantial common financial interests?

**If the answer to all of the above questions under FINANCIAL INTERESTS is either “no” or “not applicable,” check here \_\_\_\_ (NO).**

**If the answer to any of the above questions under FINANCIAL INTERESTS is “yes,” check here \_\_\_\_\_ (YES), and briefly describe the circumstances on the last page of this form.**

## 2. OTHER INTERESTS

(a) Is the central purpose of the peer review for which this disclosure form is being prepared a critical assessment and evaluation of your own work or that of your employer?

(b) Do you have any existing professional obligations (e.g., as an officer of a scientific or engineering society) that effectively require you to publicly defend a previously established position on an issue that is relevant to the scientific information that you have been invited to review as a peer reviewer?

(c) To the best of your knowledge, will your participation in this peer review enable you to obtain access to a competitor's or potential competitor's confidential proprietary information?

(d) If you have ever been a U.S. Government employee (either civilian or military), to the best of your knowledge, are there any federal conflict of interest restrictions that may be applicable to your service in connection with this review?

(e) Are you an employee of any sponsor of this project?

(f) If the peer review activity for which this form is being prepared involves reviews of specific applications and proposals for contract, grant, fellowship, etc. awards to be made by NOAA or other sponsors, do you or others with whom you have substantial common financial interests, or a familial or substantial professional relationship, have an interest in receiving or being considered for awards that are currently the subject of the review being conducted by this peer review?

(g) If the peer review activity for which this form is being prepared involves developing requests for proposals, work statements, and/or specifications, etc., are you interested in seeking an award under the program for which the peer review on which you have been asked to serve is developing the request for proposals, work statement, and/or specifications – or, are you employed in any capacity by, or do you have a financial interest in or other economic relationship with, any person or organization that to the best of your knowledge is interested in seeking an award under this program?

**If the answer to all of the above questions under OTHER INTERESTS is either “no” or “not applicable,” check here \_\_\_\_ (NO).**

**If the answer to any of the above questions under OTHER INTERESTS is “yes,” check here \_\_\_\_\_ (YES), and briefly describe the circumstances on the last page of this form.**

3. **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.** If there are relevant aspects of your background or present circumstances not addressed above that might reasonably be construed by others as affecting your judgment in matters within the assigned task of the peer review you have been invited to undertake, and therefore might constitute an actual or potential source of bias, please describe them briefly.

EXPLANATION OF “YES” RESPONSES:

*During your period of service in connection with the activity for which this form is being completed, any changes in the information reported, or any new information, which needs to be reported, should be reported promptly by written or electronic communication to NOAA.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
YOUR SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

Reviewed by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date