



United States Department of the Interior

U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
Reston, Virginia 20192

January 12, 2015

Kathleen M. Sgamma
Vice President of Government & Public Affairs
Western Energy Alliance
410 17th Street, Suite 700
Denver, CO 80202

Dear Ms. Sgamma,

This letter is to inform you that after an inquiry into the allegation of scientific or scholarly misconduct or scientific or scholarly integrity that you filed on November 19, 2013, assigned as case ESO-S0000387, I did not find merit in your allegation of scientific or scholarly misconduct or a loss of scientific integrity and the case is dismissed.

Your complaint addressed “systemic problems and scientific flaws with influential documents on greater sage-grouse and peer review thereof,” specifically to Department of the Interior reports: *A Report on National Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Measures* (December 21, 2011) produced by the Sage-grouse National Technical Team (NTT Report); and the *Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Objectives Final Report* (February 2013) (COT Report). Your examples of “scientific flaws” in these reports appears to be referencing text in the drafts of these reports and is similar to comments by the peer reviewers of these earlier drafts. Upon consideration of these peer review comments, the revised final report appears to have addressed these concerns. The independent peer review process used in each of these draft reports was in accordance with the OMB guidelines for influential information. The Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) conducted the independent peer review of the draft NTT report, and a science services contractor conducted the independent peer review of the draft COT report. Your complaint provided examples of some of the critical comments by the peer reviewers on each draft report, which also indicates that the critical purpose of a peer review was achieved. The bureaus considered and addressed these comments in their final reports. By policy, additional scientific information developed subsequent to the NTT and COT reports, will be considered in future decisions regarding the greater sage grouse.

The last statement in your letter expresses your desire to have the Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) consider the conservation value of mitigation measures employed by oil and natural gas companies. It is my understanding, in discussions with Service staff, that they have met with you a number of times and discussed approaches for the industry to compile and roll up the implementation and potential outcomes of such mitigation measures. They look forward to you presenting them with the products discussed early last year to help them evaluate industry efforts.

Sincerely,

Richard A. Coleman
Acting on behalf of the Department
Scientific Integrity Officer
Office of Science Quality and Integrity

cc: Department Scientific Integrity Officer
Office of the Executive Secretariat
Director, FWS