



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240



FEB - 8 2011

Mr. Jeff Ruch
Public Employees for Environmental
Responsibility
2000 P Street NW
Suite 240
Washington, D.C. 20036

Dear Mr. Ruch:

Thank you for your letter dated November 10, 2010, to Interior Secretary Salazar regarding the Department's policies on scientific integrity and transparency. I have been asked to respond on the Secretary's behalf.

As you know, Secretary Salazar recently issued a Department-wide policy on Scientific Integrity, and he feels very strongly that the research conducted and funded by each of our bureaus must remain unbiased and unfiltered. This is the only way to ensure we are fulfilling our obligation to make important policy decisions based upon the best scientific information available.

There has been some confusion resulting from an email from a Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement (BOEMRE) manager to employees regarding the need for public affairs review of presentations and speeches. The confusion is simply the result of a misinterpretation of the policy. The public affairs office does not review the substance of scientific materials. Rather, our agency's policy is to inform public affairs whenever a BOEMRE employee is going to be speaking on behalf of the agency, and to allow public affairs personnel to review presentation materials, such as speeches or slide presentations. Often, the public affairs office receives media queries following speeches and presentations requesting clarification on the information presented. The notification to public affairs and their review of the materials enables the office to be prepared for such questions. In addition, prior notification enables the public affairs office to further promote the speaking engagement, sometimes by issuing a press release to announce the event or arranging for media participation at the event. The public affairs office does not change, modify, or revise the substance of scientific or technical information. Rather, the review ensures policy statements are consistent, and serves as a double check for any grammatical errors (or errant uses of the former agency name, "MMS.")

Allegations that this review is somehow intended to approve or block technical or scientific papers or presentations are incorrect. BOEMRE Director Michael R. Bromwich has made clear his desire for bureau scientists to publish and present their work, and he has charged the public affairs office to aggressively promote the tremendous research being conducted by the bureau.

BOEMRE contributes on average \$30 million per year to promote environmental research in the Gulf of Mexico, Atlantic and Pacific regions and Alaska. The bureau employs some of the nation's leading scientists and funds world class research by universities and experts in the private sector. The bureau's work is chronicled in the top scientific professional journals and conferences throughout the country. Secretary Salazar, Director Bromwich and I are extremely proud of the work being accomplished by BOEMRE scientists. This work informs policy decisions at all levels of government and contributes greatly to the scientific body of knowledge regarding our nation's coastal and marine environments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ned Farquhar". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "N" and a long, sweeping tail.

Ned Farquhar
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Land and Minerals Management