

Memorandum for the Record

Date: 11/15/2022

From: William H. Werkheiser, Departmental Scientific Integrity Officer

Subject: Department of the Interior Fiscal Year 2022 Scientific Integrity Annual Report

The Department of the Interior (Department) publishes this annual report for Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 in accordance with the 2021 Presidential Memorandum, [Restoring Trust in Government Through Scientific Integrity and Evidence-Based Policymaking](#) (2021 Memo). The Department develops a wide range of scientific and scholarly products, and its reputation rests on the quality and integrity of these products. To this end, the Department's [Policy on the Integrity of Scientific and Scholarly Activities](#) defines key terms, assigns roles and responsibilities to scientific integrity personnel, sets forth procedures for investigating allegations of scientific integrity violations, and provides a [Code of Scientific and Scholarly Conduct](#) by which Departmental employees, scientists, and decisionmakers must abide. As part of its commitment to transparent communication, the Department will post this report on its [Scientific Integrity website](#), which also provides contact information, Policy and Code of Conduct links, frequently asked questions (FAQs), and closed case summaries.

Formal Complaints

During FY 2022, the Department received eleven scientific integrity complaints and no Requests for Reconsideration (RfR). The Department closed 7 Complaints by the end of the FY, one that was filed in FY 2021 and six that had been filed in prior years. At the end of the FY 2022, six formal Complaints were open. For additional detail, the Department's Scientific Integrity Website contains [closed case summaries](#).

Table 1. FY 2022 Scientific Integrity Complaint Metrics

Criterion	Number
Complaints filed during FY 2022	11
Requests for Reconsideration (RfRs) filed during FY 2022	0
Complaints pending from prior years at the beginning of FY 2022	2
RfRs pending from prior years at the beginning of FY 2022	0
Complaints pending from prior years at the end of FY 2022	1
RfRs pending from prior years at the end of FY 2022	0
Complaints closed during FY 2022	7
RfRs closed during FY 2022	0
Complaints pending at the end of FY 2022	6
RfRs pending at the end of FY 2022	0

Program Highlights

DOI Leadership and Participation in the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) Scientific Integrity Task Force

The National Science and Technology Council (NSTC) [Scientific Integrity Task Force](#) released its final report, [Protecting the Integrity of Government Science](#), in January of 2022. The Department co-chaired the Task Force and provided expertise from 10 scientists to the NSTC. Following the release of the report, the Task Force convened working groups of subject matter experts, including five DOI scientists, who were tasked with developing a government-wide definition of scientific integrity, creating a model scientific integrity policy to serve as an example for executive branch agencies, and drafting a Scientific Integrity Framework incorporating these elements as well as implementation and assessment procedures for government scientific integrity policies. Finally, the Task Force established the NSTC Subcommittee on Scientific Integrity (SOSI), an independent body of government-wide scientific integrity personnel, including two DOI scientists, that will serve as a community of practice for years to come.

Scientific Integrity Survey of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)

In September of 2022, the USGS Office of Science Quality and Integrity launched the second biennial scientific integrity employee survey to gauge employee perception and identify areas of improvement. The 2020 survey demonstrated high levels of confidence in overall implementation of the scientific integrity policy but communicated needs for further protection from political interference in USGS science. The Department prioritizes giving employees a voice on issues that affect scientific integrity.

Other Activities

- *Scientific Integrity Officer (SIO) Council:* The SIO Council is comprised of the Departmental Scientific Integrity Officer and the Bureau Scientific Integrity Officers with support from the Departmental Scientific Integrity Coordinators. The SIO Council meets twice annually to review SI Program activities, share best practices, and coordinate with stakeholders. The Council provides an active community of practice for scientific integrity which ensures consistent and accountable delivery of services.
- *Other activities during FY 2022:* liaison with partners in the Office of Inspector General and the Office of the Solicitor on cross-cutting topics; participation in the U.S. Government Interagency Working Group on Research Misconduct and Scientific Integrity; enhancement of Scientific Integrity in-person training.