

**RESPONSE TO REQUEST FOR  
EXTERNAL PEER REVIEWERS**

**CALIFORNIA  
RAPID  
ASSESSMENT  
METHOD  
(CRAM)**



# State Water Resources Control Board



Linda S. Adams  
Secretary for  
Environmental Protection

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Arnold Schwarzenegger  
Governor

**TO:** Bill Orme, Chief  
401 Certification and Wetland Program  
Division of Water Quality

*Gerald W. Bowes*

**FROM:** Gerald W. Bowes, Ph.D., Manager  
Cal/EPA Scientific Peer Review Program  
Office of Research, Planning and Performance

**DATE:** January 14, 2009

**SUBJECT: EXTERNAL PEER REVIEWERS APPROVED: PROPOSED  
ACCEPTANCE OF THE CALIFORNIA RAPID ASSESSMENT METHOD  
(CRAM) BY THE STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD AS  
THE APPROVED MEANS OF ASSESSING WETLAND CONDITION**

In response to your request for peer reviewers for the subject noted above, the University of California, through an Interagency Agreement with Cal/EPA, identified candidates it considered qualified to perform this assignment. Each candidate was required to complete and sign a Conflict of Interest Disclosure form and send it to me for review.

I subsequently requested these individuals to provide clarification where necessary; and affirm (1) there is nothing that might reasonably be construed by others as affecting their judgment in performing the review, and (2) there is nothing that might constitute an actual or potential source of bias. They were also asked to affirm they could perform an objective and independent review.

I provided candidates who were approved as reviewers my latest (January 7, 2009) supplement to the Cal/EPA peer review guidelines, and am attaching it here. Please read it carefully. In part, it provides guidance to ensure confidentiality through the peer review process.

The Supplement also notes reviewers are under no obligation to discuss their comments with third parties representing special interests after reviews have been submitted, and we recommend that they do not.

Reviewers must keep their identities confidential, and I ask that you do also to avoid compromising the external review. Approved reviewers are identified below.

*California Environmental Protection Agency*

1. Gerald J. Niemi, Ph.D.  
Professor of Biology  
Natural Resources Research Institute  
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2. James T. Anderson, Ph.D.  
Professor, Wildlife Ecology and Management  
Director Environmental Research Center  
West Virginia University  
Wildlife and Fisheries Resources Program  
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3. Denice H. Wardrop, Ph.D., P.E.  
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Associate Director, Penn State Cooperative Wetlands Center  
Senior Research Associate and Associate Professor of Geography and Ecology  
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4. Richard D. Rheinhardt, Ph.D.  
Research Associate Professor  
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Biographical information for the approved reviewers is attached to this memorandum.

**Please contact your reviewers right away.** Tell them when you will transmit the material. They have accepted the assignment based on the date of availability given in your letter of request to me. If preparation of the material is delayed, ask them if the new date is acceptable, including me as a "cc." If subsequent delays occur, inform the reviewers and me as soon as possible. I am often contacted by reviewers and the University if delays occur and reviewers are not kept up to date.

If the number of pages you plan to send the reviewers is significant, I recommend you provide them a hard copy of this material. You can enquire if any would prefer an electronic copy as well. Ask them: (1) if their preferred mailing address is the same as that given above; and (2) to provide whatever additional information is necessary for an overnight delivery service.

Provide a cover letter to initiate the review process (with a copy to me of the letter only). Include with it your request letter to me, which provides a concise synopsis of your intended actions, and its three attachments. **Please inform them that their review must:**

**(1) follow the guidance provided in Attachment 2;**

**(2) address the topics listed in Attachment 2, as expertise allows, in the order given.**

When the reviews have been completed, please send me an electronic copy of each review for the files I keep here.

If I can provide additional help, contact me at any time during the review process.

Attachments

cc: Elizabeth Haven, Assistant Deputy Director, Division of Water Quality, Sacramento  
Ken Harris, Manager, Regulatory Section, Division of Water Quality, Sacramento

