

Why We Conduct Peer-Reviews

The law, now Health and Safety Code Section 57004, requires all Cal/EPA organizations to submit for external scientific review the scientific basis or scientific components of all proposed rules. The peer reviewer's responsibility is to determine whether the scientific portion is based upon sound scientific knowledge, methods, and practices.

The State Water Board has developed peer review guidelines to accomplish a peer review.

The guidelines clearly lay out the responsibilities of the reviewers and of the regulatory agencies responding to them.

The guidelines require the scientific components of a proposal to be commented upon by scientific experts.

An initial request for reviewers is prepared by Cal/EPA organizations for each proposal to be reviewed and is submitted to the Cal/EPA Program Manager for Scientific Peer Review. The request includes a cover letter setting the context for the proposed regulatory action, and attachments including:

- a plain English summary
- the conclusions or assumptions to provide focus for the review
- a description of how the science is being implemented
- and a list of participants that developed the proposal as these individuals cannot serve as peer reviewers;

Reviewers can also comment on essential topics they feel might have been over-looked, and on whether the parts of the strategy logically fit together as a coherent whole.

Additional Peer Review Opportunities

Other worthy subjects of statewide significance, such as risk assessments and technical guidance documents, can also be submitted for review.

The Process

A summary of the key steps is described at [\(link\)](#).

The detailed step-by-step guidance for setting up and obtaining reviews appears as "Exhibit F" [\(link\)](#) in an Interagency Agreement between Cal/EPA and the University of California.

Supplemental Information for the Peer Review Program

- Statute Requirement [\(link\)](#).
- Conflict of Interest Disclosure [\(link\)](#) (NAS-based form and follow-up affirmations).
- A January 7, 2009 Supplement to the Guidelines [\(link\)](#), which in part, provides guidance to ensure confidentiality of the process.