August 4, 2023

Cynthia Gorham
Senior Environmental Scientist, Restoration and Protection Planning Unit
San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board

Subject: Draft Response to Request for External Scientific Peer Review of Proposed Total Maximum Daily Loads for Indicator Bacteria and Trash in the Lower Tijuana River

Dear Cynthia Gorham,

This letter responds to the attached 08 June 2023, request for external scientific peer review for the subject noted above. The review process is described below. All steps were conducted in confidence. Reviewers' identities were not disclosed.

To begin the process for selecting reviewers, I contacted the University of California, Berkeley (University) and requested recommendations for candidates considered qualified to perform the assignment. This service is supported through an Interagency Agreement co-signed by CalEPA and the University. The University was provided with the request letter and attachments. The University interviews each promising candidate.

Each candidate who was both qualified and available for the review period was asked to complete a Conflict of Interest (COI) Disclosure form and submit to the CalEPA Peer Review Program for review, with their Curriculum Vitae. The cover letter for the COI form describes the context for COI concerns that must be taken into consideration when completing the form: "As noted, staff will use this information to evaluate whether a reasonable member of the public would have a serious concern about [the candidate's] ability to provide a neutral and objective review of the work product."

For each candidate judged to be free of conflict, I approved that person as reviewer, affirmed by an approval letter to initiate the review. These letters provided access instructions to a secure FTP site where all material to be reviewed was placed. Each reviewer was asked to address each conclusion for which he or she had previously agreed, and these were identified in the letter. Thirty days were provided for the review, unless a reviewer requested additional time.

Guidance was provided a) to ensure confidentiality through the review process; and b) for format presentation to meet accessibility requirements.

Reviewers' names, affiliations, curriculum vitae, initiating letters and reviews are being sent to you now with this letter. This information can be accessed easily through the bookmarks provided in this file.

Approved reviewers:

1. Shimshon Belkin, Ph.D., Professor
   Department of Plant and Environmental Sciences
   The Alexander Silberman Institute of Life Sciences
   Silberman Life Sciences Building 3-482
   The Hebrew University of Jerusalem
   Jerusalem 91904, Israel

2. Win Cowger, Ph.D.
   Moore Institute for Plastic Pollution Research

3. Jon M. Hathaway, Ph.D.
   Associate Professor Dept. of Civil & Environmental Engineering
   University of Tennessee Knoxville
   415 John D. Tickle Engineering Building
   Knoxville, Tennessee, 37996

4. Micaella Raíssa Falcão de Moura, Ph.D.
   Professor Catholic University of Pernambuco
   R. do Príncipe, 526 - Boa Vista
   Recife - Pernambuco, Brazil
   CEP: 50050-900

If you have any questions, or require clarification from the reviewers, please contact me directly.

Sincerely,

Carol Perkins
Manager, CalEPA External Scientific Peer Review Program
Office of Research, Planning, and Performance
State Water Resources Control Board
Carol.Perkins@waterboards.ca.gov

Attachments:

(1) 08 June 2023 Request by Cynthia Gorham for Scientific Peer Review

(2) Letters to reviewers initiating the review
   i. Belkin, Ph.D.
   ii. Cowger, Ph.D.
   iii. Hathaway, Ph.D.
   iv. Moura, Ph.D.

(3) *Guidance to Reviewers*, posted at FTP site

(4) Curriculum Vitae
   i. Belkin, Ph.D.
   ii. Cowger, Ph.D.
   iii. Hathaway, Ph.D.
   iv. Moura, Ph.D.

(5) Review reports
   i. Belkin, Ph.D.
   ii. Cowger, Ph.D.
   iii. Hathaway, Ph.D.
   iv. Moura, Ph.D.

cc: Melissa Corona, P.E.
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Vincent Vu
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