

# THE NATIONAL ACADEMIES

*Advisers to the Nation on Science, Engineering, and Medicine*

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May 25, 2010

The Honorable Ken Salazar, Secretary of the Interior  
1849 C Street N.W.  
Washington, DC 20240

The Honorable Gary Locke, Secretary of Commerce  
1401 Constitution Ave., N.W.  
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Locke and Secretary Salazar:

On behalf of the National Research Council, I write to address recent developments pertaining to our Committee on Sustainable Water and Environmental Management in the California Bay-Delta. As you know, Dr. Patricia Glibert recently released a much-publicized scientific article in pre-publication form that will appear in the peer reviewed journal *Reviews in Fisheries Science*. In this article she concluded that the dominant stressor in the California Bay-Delta is ammonium from sewage, and that until reductions in that ammonium occur, other measures, including regulation of water pumping or manipulations of salinity, will likely have little benefit. Other stressors such as ammonium will be a major topic for the committee's second report. Because her work is current and reaches very strong conclusions on a topic central to our task, National Research Council officials encouraged her to step off the committee and to present her research to the committee in open session at the upcoming meeting of the committee (July 13, 2010). Dr. Glibert resigned from the committee on May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2010 and accepted our invitation to present her research.

NRC officials made the request in the interest of preserving the organization's integrity, independence, and objectivity—and thus the usefulness and value of the committee's results. This perspective in no way reflects an institutional position on Dr. Glibert's work. Further, there should be no implication that Dr. Glibert was influenced in her research by the interests of her sponsors. Dr. Glibert was a valued member of the committee and the NRC appreciates her service. However, it is simply not appropriate that she be in a position of evaluating her own work, which reaches both scientific and policy conclusions that are central to the committee's charge, beyond what we had previously understood to be within the scope of her research. Yet there is no question that Dr. Glibert's paper will become an important resource for the committee as it moves forward.

On May 21, fellow committee member Dr. Michael McGuire resigned in objection to the requested resignation of Dr. Glibert, stating that he objected to the "stilling" of a point of view on the committee that he shares, noting that others on the committee have points of view. His resignation is regrettable, and his assertion about "stilling" a point of view is not correct as I have explained. I also note that none of these other committee members have published or to our knowledge made public statements on matters so central to the committee's charge.

These resignations come at a time of transition for the committee as it moves into deliberations for the second report. These resignations have no impact on the committee's first report issued in mid-March. Presently, the committee is preparing to move into phase two of its assignment, which will probe in depth other "stressors" on fishes such as are addressed in Dr. Glibert's paper. Prior to the upcoming meeting in mid-July, both Dr. Glibert and Dr. McGuire will be replaced so as to maintain the committee's expertise and balance. We are confident that the committee will be fully and appropriately constituted as we move into the second, important phase of this study.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Stephen D. Parker". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Stephen D. Parker