

STAFF RESPONSE TO THE REVIEW PANEL FINDINGS



Presentation to SCCWRP Commission

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STARTING POINT

- **We had the right people on the panel**
 - They are all prominent scientists
 - They have all have experience running similar organizations
- **They are invested in helping SCCWRP evolve**
 - They have no agenda other than helping us
- **They got it right**
 - We should take their feedback to heart
 - I hope we take action on every recommendation they made

THEIR BIG PICTURE ASSESSMENT

- **SCCWRP is one of the premier water quality research organizations in the world**
 - “A small agency with a disproportionately large impact on environmental decisions”
- **Most organizations focus on outputs; SCCWRP focuses on outcomes**
- **Achieve a balance of meeting the needs of its funding partners and investing in new research areas**
- **There is nothing broken that requires an immediate fix**
 - However, there are several aspects that can be improved

AREAS FOR POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENT

- **Four of the recommendations focused on taking the CTAG relationship to the next level**
- **Reconsider the funding model**
- **Better involve the Commission in research planning through a series of focused meetings**
- **Better inform and involve staff in organizational directions and decisions**

CTAG RELATIONSHIP

- **The Panel is absolutely correct about this one**
 - CTAG is essential to our function and there is room for improvement
 - The Panel report motivated both staff and CTAG
- **We have already taken several positive steps**
 - Agreement on a new CTAG Charter
 - A set of operating guidelines that improve the CTAG meetings
 - A new series of intersessional meetings to discuss research planning at a level of detail we can't achieve at regular CTAG meetings
- **You will hear more about these changes later today during agenda item #5**

SCCWRP'S FUNDING MODEL

- **SCCWRP core funding has remained static for the last five years**
- **We no longer meeting all of our financial goals**
 - Our research is increasingly being driven by the wants of external funders
 - Too high a percentage of our funding comes from regulatory agencies
- **This is starting to have repercussions for daily operation**
 - We need Commission input about what the future funding model looks like
- **This will be the focus of our discussion today during agenda item #6**

COMMISSION INVOLVEMENT IN RESEARCH PLANNING

- **Commission has historically stayed away from research planning**
 - Want to ensure the research independence of the organization
 - However, I try to consult with you individually through an annual lunch with each Commissioner
- **Panel is recommending that we get that feedback through interactions with groups of Commissioners**
 - Groups defined either geographically or by sector
 - Would need to respect Brown Act requirements
- **At your pleasure**
 - Would you find this helpful?

STAFF INVOLVEMENT

- **We held several staff-only meetings to begin addressing this recommendation**
 - Meetings without Department heads or above
 - Separate meetings for scientists, technicians and administration
 - Meetings run by one staff scientist who was looking for commonality
- **The charge: Identify five things staff would do differently if they were Director**
- **We have a meeting on Monday to talk with staff about the outcome**
 - There will be a number of things we do differently as a result
 - I look forward to briefing you about those changes at your June meeting

WHY WE ARE SUCCESSFUL

- **The organizational structure**
 - Commission is unique vehicle for connecting science with management
 - CTAG is a wonderful mechanism for facilitating adoption of the products
- **We have a focused and well understood mission**
- **Base funding provides flexibility to address right issues**
 - Also allows us to stay true to the mission
- **Our commitment to partnership**
 - Facilitating scientific consensus
- **Staff continuity**
 - Fosters development of relationships

WHAT THEY DIDN'T SAY

- **Panel was given freedom to address whatever they liked**
 - Important to look at what they didn't comment on
 - If they had concerns they surely would have been brought out
- **Quality of our people and our research**
- **Topics on which we work**
 - Although privately they indicated we should put more emphasis on climate change, as it will affect everything you do
- **How we interact with other scientific peers**
 - We pride ourselves on partnering and consensus building
- **Financial management**