



Code of Ethics for Members of the Board of Technical Experts and Sea Lamprey Research Board

Preamble: The Board of Technical Experts and the Sea Lamprey Research Board have important roles in the selection and funding of research essential for achievement of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission's strategic vision. Their counsel to the commission should be fair and impartial and reflect the highest standards of integrity. Because members of these groups are also often integrally involved in the commission's research programs, the appearance and opportunity for conflicts of interest exist. Members must strive to avoid circumstances that give even an appearance of a conflict of interest or, when avoidance is not feasible, should disclose fully the nature of the conflict and work diligently to minimize it.

Conflict of Interest: A conflict of interest exists when financial interests, or other opportunities for tangible personal or professional benefit, could be construed to exert an improper influence on a member's professional judgment, while that member is engaged in activities of the Board. Improper influence could be used to not only advance one's own research program but also to promote unfairly a colleague's or former graduate student's program. Thus, care must be exercised to avoid a conflict of interest during the peer-review process and the discussion of past, current, or proposed research. A conflict of interest also exists when circumstances simply have the appearance of compromising the professional judgment of a member. Conflicts of interest are not accusations and do not imply that a member's judgment was compromised. It is the policy of the Commission that conflicts of interest should be avoided wherever possible and disclosed and minimized in situations where interests cannot be reasonably separated. Whenever a conflict of interest arises during the discussions of the board or working group, the member should disclose the conflict and excuse themselves from the discussions.

Code of Ethics: A member of the Board should:

1. Adhere to the highest standards of accuracy and truth;
2. Avoid, or disclose to the Board or science director and minimize any circumstances that present, or appear to present, a conflict of interest;
3. Promote mutual understanding, respect, and collegial relationships among research scientists;
4. Avoid injuring or impugning the professional reputation or practice of other scientists and research colleagues;
5. Provide advice only on topics on which they are informed and qualified through professional training or experience and to do so with objectivity, diligence, and honesty;
6. In all communications clearly distinguish between professional opinion from accepted knowledge or fact;
7. Avoid misrepresenting the actions or policies of the Board or Commission.
8. Maintain the confidentiality of all proprietary or otherwise sensitive information in research proposals, peer reviews, and the associated discussions and decisions of the Board.

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GREAT LAKES FISHERY COMMISSION