

21 January 2011

John Holdren, Director  
Office of Science and Technology Policy  
Executive Office of the President  
725 17th Street Room 5228  
Washington, DC 20502

Dear Director Holdren:

The undersigned scientific and professional societies, representing thousands of scientists and natural resource professionals, many of whom are employed by federal agencies, thank you for your support of scientific integrity through your Memorandum of 17 December 2010. We especially appreciate the acknowledgement of the benefits of full participation in professional and scholarly societies.

Scientific and professional organizations play many important roles in our society, including sharing information through scientific and popular publications, facilitating expert networks, providing an independent and science-based perspective on relevant government policies, and offering professional development and certification programs. Such organizations also allow agencies to maintain a diverse and highly qualified professional workforce, help to develop a higher degree of public confidence and trust in professional abilities, and provide greater agency visibility and enhanced professional reputation. Full participation in professional societies is an important part of a scientist or natural resource manager's career and professional development.

Leadership in professional societies is crucial to many natural resource professionals' careers and should be encouraged rather than hindered by the federal government. Thank you for recommending the removal of barriers to federal employees serving as officers or on governing boards of such societies. In recent years, some federal agencies have chosen to enforce a policy that prohibits federal employees from serving on the boards of outside organizations under any circumstance, or have created conditions that make it virtually impossible for their employees to serve. We look forward to changes in these policies in light of your memorandum.

Thank you for your strong public support for scientific integrity in the federal government. The undersigned organizations are looking forward to seeing the general principles elucidated in your memo translated into action at the agency level.

Sincerely,

American Fisheries Society  
American Institute of Biological Sciences  
American Society of Agronomy  
American Statistical Association  
Crop Science Society of America  
Ecological Society of America  
The Ornithological Council

River Management Society  
Society for Conservation Biology  
Society for Ecological Restoration  
Society for Range Management  
Society of American Foresters  
Soil and Water Conservation Society  
Soil Science Society of America  
The Wildlife Society

cc: John Berry, Director, Office of Personnel Management  
Robert Cusick, Director, Office of Government Ethics