

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Record

FROM: Sarah Kapnick
NOAA Chief Scientist



SUBJECT: 2022 Scientific and Research Misconduct Annual Report

NOAA is publishing the following report in accordance with NOAA Administrative Order 202-735D.2: Scientific Integrity, Section 10: Communication, Oversight, Review, and Reporting. During calendar year 2022 (January – December 2022), NOAA received three allegations of scientific misconduct involving NOAA employees. The status of all allegations is as follows:

Allegations in Progress

None. Two of the allegations filed in 2022 were dismissed at the assessment phase. The third allegation was withdrawn by the Complainant.

Allegations Closed

2021-001Q – A NOAA political appointee alleged scientific misconduct by a career Senior Executive Service (SES) employee by distributing emails that urged career staff to use only the best possible science in development of the National Climate Assessment and to avoid any political pressure to do otherwise. Complainant alleged these messages, while not naming him, were clearly directed at him and created a hostile work environment. The Scientific Integrity Officer (SIO) referred the matter to inquiry. The Inquiry Team (IT) recommended a finding of no scientific misconduct.

2021-002Q – A NOAA career SES alleged scientific misconduct by two NOAA political appointees. The political appointees were both detailed to another federal office and, while there, worked on a series of brief papers on climate that were published on a non-government website, but with the letterhead and logo of the other federal office. Upon being informed of the matter, the director of the other federal office sent the political appointees back to NOAA and stated officially that the papers had no government endorsement. The SIO referred the matter to inquiry. The IT recommended a finding of no scientific misconduct, given that the director of the other federal office acted promptly to disavow the papers and that the papers were all quickly removed from the non-government website.

Consultations

The NOAA Scientific Integrity Officer engaged in three consultations in 2022, none of which resulted in a formal allegation of scientific misconduct.