

Appendix I – Scientific Reports Competing Interests Policy

<https://www.nature.com/srep/journal-policies/editorial-policies#competing>

Competing interests policy

In the interests of transparency and to help readers to form their own judgements of potential bias, authors must declare any competing financial and/or non-financial interests in relation to the work described.

Definition of a competing interest

For the purposes of this policy, competing interests are defined as financial and non-financial interests that could directly undermine, or be perceived to undermine, the objectivity, integrity and value of a publication, through a potential influence on the judgements and actions of authors with regard to objective data presentation, analysis and interpretation.

Financial competing interests include any of the following:

Funding: Research support (including salaries, equipment, supplies, and other expenses) by organizations that may gain or lose financially through this publication¹. A specific role for the funder in the conceptualization, design, data collection, analysis, decision to publish, or preparation of the manuscript, should be disclosed.

Employment: Recent (while engaged in the research project), present or anticipated employment by any organization that may gain or lose financially through this publication².

¹ Four out of five of the authors of the Precht *et al.* study (W. Precht, B. Gintert, M. Robbart, and R. Fura) work for Dial Cordy and Associates, who were hired as environmental contractors by Great Lakes Dredge and Dock, the dredging firm contracted by the US Army Corps of Engineers for the Port of Miami dredge project.

² Precht and colleagues were working for Dial Cordy and Associates at the time this study was undertaken and published. Moreover, there was anticipated future employment because Dial Cordy and Associates were also hired by PortMiami directly to conduct post-construction compliance monitoring that took place after the publication of this study. Dial Cordy were also then hired by Port Everglades as subcontractors for pre-dredging monitoring for the expansion dredging project also bisecting the Florida reef tract, planned for 2020. Dial Cordy will also likely compete for the environmental consulting subcontract for Port Everglades expansion, now scheduled for 2020.

Personal financial interests: Stocks or shares in companies that may gain or lose financially through publication; consultation fees or other forms of remuneration (including reimbursements for attending symposia) from organizations that may gain or lose financially³; patents or patent applications (awarded or pending) filed by the authors or their institutions whose value may be affected by publication. For patents and patent applications, disclosure of the following information is requested: patent applicant (whether author or institution), name of inventor(s), application number, status of application, specific aspect of manuscript covered in patent application.

It is difficult to specify a threshold at which a financial interest become significant, but note that many US universities require faculty members to disclose interests exceeding \$10,000 or 5% equity in a company (see, for example, B. Lo et al. New Engl. J. Med. 343, 1616-1620; 2000). Any such figure is necessarily arbitrary, so we offer as one possible practical alternative guideline: "Any undeclared competing financial interests that could embarrass you were they to become publicly known after your work was published."

We do not consider diversified mutual funds or investment trusts to constitute a competing financial interest.

Non-financial competing interests:

Non-financial competing interests can take different forms, including personal or professional relations with organizations and individuals. We would encourage authors and referees to declare any unpaid roles or relationships that might have a bearing on the publication process. Examples of non-financial competing interests include (but are not limited to):

- Unpaid membership in a government or non-governmental organization
- Unpaid membership in an advocacy or lobbying organization
- Unpaid advisory position in a commercial organization
- Writing or consulting for an educational company
- Acting as an expert witness⁴

³ Dial Cordy and Associates are an organization that may gain or lose financially from the outcome of the study. They are the direct employers of Mr. Precht and other authors listed above.

⁴ Mr. Precht gave testimony in court on behalf of the Army Corps' dredging contractors, during which he refuted the conclusions of federal, state, and county agencies who had independently concluded that there were devastating effects of the dredge operation on coral health. He has also reached out to the

Competing interests statement format guidelines

The statement included in the article file must be explicit and unambiguous, describing any potential competing interest (or lack thereof) for EACH contributing author.

Examples of declarations are:

Competing interests

The author(s) declare no competing interests.

Competing interests

Dr X's work has been funded by A. He has received compensation as a member of the scientific advisory board of B and owns stock in the company. He also has consulted for C and received compensation. Dr Y and Dr Z declare no potential conflict of interest.

Application to authors

The corresponding author is responsible for submitting a competing interests statement on behalf of all authors of the paper. This statement must be included in the submitted article file, following the 'Author Contributions' section in 'Additional Information', under the heading 'Competing interests'. The corresponding author will also be required to indicate the existence of a competing interest within the submission system.

We recognize that some authors may be bound by confidentiality agreements. In such cases the publishing team will investigate further and may at their discretion invite the authors to state in the online version, in place of itemized disclosure: "The authors declare that they are bound by confidentiality agreements that prevent them from disclosing their financial interests in this work."

We do not require authors to state the monetary value of their financial interests.

Application to peer-reviewers

Scientific Reports invites peer-reviewers to exclude themselves in cases where there is a significant conflict of interest, financial or otherwise. However, just as financial interests need not invalidate the conclusions of an article, nor do they automatically disqualify

Army Corps of Engineers offering his services as media spokesperson, but it is not known if these services were intended to be remunerated or not. Emails can be provided upon request.

an individual from evaluating it. We ask peer-reviewers to inform the editors of any related interests, including financial interests as defined above, that might be perceived as relevant. Editors will consider these statements when weighing peer-reviewers' recommendations.

Application to editors

All Nature Research journal editorial staff are required to declare to their employer any interests — financial or otherwise — that might influence, or be perceived to influence, their editorial practices. Failure to do so is a disciplinary offence.