

Call to Action: Please Comment on OMB's Proposed Overhaul of Federal Grant Regulations

On May 29, 2026, the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) proposed sweeping government-wide changes to U.S. federal grants and cooperative agreements ([Part 200](#) of Title 2 of the US Code of Federal Regulations). This [proposed rule](#), "[Regulation for Federal Financial Assistance](#)," would fundamentally reshape how federally funded science is awarded, managed, and maintained.

If approved, this rule will increase political control over science, weaken independent, merit-based scientific review, add burdensome administrative red tape, and dramatically expand the government's power to abruptly terminate active grants.

For our paleontological community in the U.S. and our international collaborators, the consequences are severe. This proposal directly threatens:

- **Scientific Independence:** Gives political appointees veto power over grant awards to ensure they align with changing political priorities (§ 200.205).
- **Funding Stability:** Expands agency authority to abruptly suspend or terminate active, multi-year grants mid-award based on shifting political climate rather than scientific performance (§ 200.340).
- **Dissemination of Knowledge:** Bans the use of federal grant funds for journal publication and open-access fees without rare, case-by-case agency pre-approval (§ 200.461).
- **Professional Development and Communication:** Restricts conference travel by requiring specialized agency pre-approval just to use grant funds to attend scientific meetings (§ 200.432)
- **International Collaborations:** Severely limits international research partnerships (§ 200.220)
- **Training of Undergraduate and Graduate Students and Early Career Scientists:** Introduces administrative hurdles that directly jeopardize the use of federal funds to support student stipends and wages (§ 200.430), as well as scholarships (§ 200.466).

OUR POSITION

Standing in opposition to this sweeping overhaul, the Paleontological Society and the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology advocate for a comprehensive rewrite of the OMB's proposal. Government regulations should advance scientific inquiry, not restrict it.

Scientific merit must determine how taxpayer-funded research is advanced; political alignment and administrative gridlock should never dictate the success of scientific endeavors.

YOUR VOICE REALLY MATTERS

Public comments are due by July 13, 2026. Under federal law, the OMB is legally required to review and respond to substantive public comments before issuing a final rule. **Comments should be submitted [directly to OMB](#).**

Form letters and generic comments are easily dismissed. **The most effective comments are written in your own words, drawing directly upon your unique professional experience.** A concise, specific narrative explaining how these rules would harm your specific research, institution, or students is immensely powerful. You do not need to address the entire, 412-page proposal. Instead, focus entirely on the sections that intersect your work.

Please Submit Comments If You Are:

- **A researcher** relying on federal grants for fieldwork, collections-based research, lab analyses, or collaborative projects.
- **A museum or collections professional** responsible for the stewardship, accessibility, and long-term care of scientific specimens and data.
- **A faculty member** who trains students and early career researchers with federal grants.
- **An undergrad, grad student, or postdoc** whose education relies on stable, predictable federal funding.
- **A research administrator** tasked with managing grant compliance and navigating institutional overhead.
- **A member of the public** who has learned something cool from federally supported scientific research and education.

When drafting your statement, consider addressing these specific provisions using concrete examples from your career:

- **§ 200.205 (Political vs. Peer Review):** Describe how rigorous, independent peer review ensures fair, scientifically sound funding decisions compared to political oversight.
- **§ 200.340–343 (Discretionary Termination):** Explain why multi-year field excavations, long-term environmental/evolutionary modeling, and student

support depend on stable, predictable grant lifecycles that cannot be terminated mid-award.

- **§ 200.461 & § 200.432 (Publication & Conference Costs):** Quantify how a ban on using grant funds for journal publication fees or strict pre-approvals for scientific meetings will stifle scientific communication, block open science, negatively impact the next generation of scientists in your lab, and isolate researchers.
- **§ 200.220 (Foreign Collaboration):** Detail how restrictions on international partnerships would stall global paleontological field research and data sharing.

Ready to submit? For additional guidance we recommend reviewing the Geological Society of America's excellent [OMB Comment Toolkit](#) and the Planetary Society [Grant Rule Comparison](#). Comments must be submitted directly to the OMB via the [Federal Register portal](#) by July 13, 2026.