

EDITORIAL

Effective immediately, the *Journal of Climate* will entertain submissions intended for publication in a new *Letters* section. The purpose of the *Letters* section is to provide rapid and high-profile publication of brief communications on important and timely topics of great interest to the climate research community. This initiative is being taken in response to frequent requests from the AMS membership, over a period of years, for a more rapid mode of publication for results of especially high scientific interest.

Submissions for the *Letters* section, like all other submissions, will be sent to the chief editor's office. *Letters* submissions will be subject to the following special rules, however, which do not apply to other submissions.

- In final published form, *Letters* cannot exceed four printed pages in length, including the abstract, text, figures, tables, and references together. The abstract is limited to about 100 words.
- All *Letters* submissions must be provided electronically, as either .ps (Postscript) or .pdf (Portable Document Format) files. Files in .pdf format are strongly preferred because that format greatly simplifies the publication process.
- Authors are required to submit, along with their manuscript, a brief statement justifying rapid publication in the *Letters* section of the journal. This must also be submitted electronically.
- Authors will be requested to fax the copyright form at the time of submission to initiate the review process.
- The required copyright transfer form with *original* signatures should be submitted by regular mail shortly thereafter. Please note that processing cannot be completed until the original form is received at the chief editor's office.
- Submissions will be screened, by the chief editor and at least one other editor of the *Journal of Climate*, for their importance, timeliness, and level of interest to the climate research community. In some cases additional expert advice, possibly from associate editors, will be sought as an aid in the screening process. In addition, *Letters* will be screened for good writing style (including good English usage) and overall clarity of exposition. Note that brevity in itself does not qualify a manuscript for submission as a letter. It is expected that a significant fraction of *Letters* submissions will be declined at this stage.
- Submissions that survive the screening process will be sent out electronically for review by precontacted reviewers who will be asked to provide their reviews electronically within one week. Reviewers will be asked to rate manuscripts on the basis of their importance, timeliness, and level of interest to the climate research community, and will also provide additional comments and suggestions regarding the technical merit, quality of the writing and figures, and all the usual criteria associated with the peer review process.
- Following receipt of the reviews, papers surviving the first stage of the review process, as described above, will be sent out for revision. There will be no "major" revisions for *Letters*. Manuscripts requiring revisions will be rejected.
- Authors will be asked to complete all (minor) revisions within two weeks. A revised manuscript will be submitted electronically as either a .ps or .pdf file.
- There will be no second-round reviews, other than by the editor(s).

The process outlined above is designed to achieve a decision on each submitted *Letters* manuscript in a very short period of time. Accepted manuscripts will be sent both electronically and in paper form to the AMS. The electronic files will be posted as soon as possible (very soon after receipt by the AMS) on the AMS Web site.

In addition, an accepted letter will be published as expeditiously as possible in the printed version of the *Journal of Climate*, in a special *Letters* section at the beginning of each issue. The printed version will be copyedited, using the paper version of the manuscript. This means that in most cases the printed version will be slightly different from the version posted immediately after acceptance.

The new *Letters* section of the journal is now accepting submissions. It promises to be an effective vehicle for expeditious dissemination of important research results.

David A. Randall
Chief Editor