

Dear Editor,

It is regrettable to see that instead of constructive arguments Dr. Tesche's review devolved into personal opinions and petty attacks. The suggestion that we "cherry-picked minor comments" is highly inappropriate; we clearly addressed all of the reviewer's comments equitably and we did provide a point-by-point response. One of the points of contention is the quality of the SODA retrievals. In our response we compared SODA data with independent lidar measurements (HSRL data) and reported that for AODs > 0.03, the lidar ratio retrieval uncertainties were below 50%. We think that Dr. Tesche's opinion in this matter is based on his lack of understanding of the SODA product. SODA provides a direct measurement of the laser attenuation at the surface level and is not affected by the aerosol type. Comments about the paper by Cattrall et al. (2005) are misinformed, as directly measured lidar ratios are tabulated in Table 3 of the paper. Finally, whether or not Dr. Tesche is the spokesperson for the lidar community is irrelevant, because the analysis for a wind-speed dependence of the marine lidar ratio was requested by one of the reviewers and has been discussed in the literature (e.g., Sayer et al., 2012).

Dr. Tesche's emotionally charged comments and scientific criticism are in stark contrast with the viewpoint of the other (all positive) reviews. The fact that Dr. Tesche dismisses the very same analysis he requested to be carried out (i.e., independent verification of the SODA results) and then requests additional data analysis for the time periods not even considered in the current paper shows that nothing we do will satisfy this reviewer. Whatever his motivation, we strongly believe that Dr. Tesche's current comments are in violation of ACP rules for General Obligations for Referees and are causing a conflict during which continuation of the peer-review process becomes impractical.

In closing, we feel we have done everything in our power to satisfy all the reviewers' comments and we are happy to see that all anonymous referees felt that the manuscript was acceptable for publication. We also believe that most of Dr. Tesche's current comments are his personal opinions that are in disagreement with the data provided in our paper. If, for some reason, you do not feel comfortable making an editorial decision, we would respectfully ask transferring the manuscript to the Executive Editor or other co-Editors.

Sincerely,
Nicholas Meskhidze