Dear Eric

Thank you for your reply and your clarifications. I understand it such that you have reviewed the files stored in the submission system concerning our manuscript. However, there was also a letter of our response to the comments of Referee 3 sent to the Editor upon the decision. This letter (attached) and the Editor's response are not stored in your system, but it is namely these developments that have caused our concern regarding the review procedure.

I emphasize that we had had no concerns regarding the review procedure until receiving the final letter from the Editor (which you appear not to have seen). We do understand it is normal that scientists may disagree on controversial issues. It is also normal, as you would certainly agree, that if the authors see that the referee is very seriously mistaken, they would have an opportunity to point that out to the Editor. Our concerns arose when the Editor motivated that his decision was final and that our response should be disregarded by stating that "Manuscripts are accepted only when all the reviewers are in agreement about publication. In your case, two of the reviewers (#2 and #3), both of whom are very well-respected, were strongly against publication."

You say in your letter that the Editor "has as all latitude to make his/her decision based on his own reading of a manuscript -- of course, editors' decisions are usually strongly guided by all the reviews they obtain, as I am sure you understand since this forms the core of the peer-review process." This contradicts the Editor's words that the manuscripts are accepted only when all the reviewers are in agreement (which means that every reviewer has the right to veto any manuscript). Upon receiving your letter, I understand even less what was the basis for the decision to disregard our response to the erroneous comments of Referee 3.

You say that 'GRL editors make a specific effort to find the best possible reviewers, with the strongest expertise in the fields covered by manuscripts'. In the view of this, we feel that our response to Referee 3 should have been considered by the Editor at face value, because another referee (Referee 1) was strongly in favor of the publication.

Neither do we understand the issue with Referee 2. Did the referee refuse to re-review our paper before seeing our response? If so, why did the Editor inform us he was planning to send our response to Referee 2? If the referee, who characterized the paper as interesting, refused to re-review our paper after seeing our response, how should this be interpreted? Can the reviewer be strongly against a paper without any explanations?

So please appreciate our position. Our response to Referee 2 was never mentioned. Our response to Referee 3 was ignored because the referee was well-respected. We did not understand this procedure. We were not disturbed and worried that our paper was rejected. We were disturbed and worried that, in our opinion, the scientific logic was sacrificed and scientific arguments were not taken into consideration losing force in the view of some others. When we were asked by AGU Publishers of our opinion of the peer-review process, we did express our concerns.

With best regards,
Anastassia

PS I did not write to the Editor-in-Chief, but responded to the e-mail with the questionnaire with a copy to the handling Editor at grlonline@agu.org, the e-mail address I was instructed to use to correspond with the Editor.