

Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works
“Oversight Hearing to Receive Testimony from Environmental Protection Agency
Administrator Scott Pruitt”

Questions for the Record for Administrator Scott Pruitt
January 30, 2018

Chairman Barrasso:

1. At the beginning of this Administration, prior to your confirmation, EPA alleged that Wyoming contributed to ozone problems in Douglas County, Colorado under the 2008 ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). To reach this conclusion, EPA applied a methodology designed for Eastern states.

Western states have different topographies, higher altitudes, and different weather patterns than Eastern states. In addition, Western states have higher frequencies of wildfires than the East. Under EPA’s “one-size-fits-all” model, EPA projected that a tiny amount of emissions would move from Wyoming to Colorado. EPA then imposed additional regulatory burdens on Wyoming. I raised my serious concerns and objections to EPA’s action in a recent letter to you on January 19, 2018 (attached).

In your oral testimony, you stated that EPA is evaluating challenges with international air transport. In a February 1, 2018 response to my letter from Bill Wehrum, Assistant Administrator for the Office of Air and Radiation (attached), he stated EPA plans to work with states “early this year to provide more information and flexibility as [states] look to address interstate transport issues under the 2015 ozone NAAQS.” Will EPA also address any remaining interstate transport issues concerning other NAAQS, including the 2008 ozone NAAQS issue identified in my letter? If so, do you have an anticipated timeline for addressing these issues?

On October 27, 2017, EPA issued a memorandum providing information to assist states’ efforts to develop, supplement, or resubmit their “good neighbor” state implementation plans (SIP) for the 2008 ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). We noted in this memorandum that states may be able to rely on the modeling information conveyed with the memorandum as part of a demonstration of compliance with the good neighbor requirements. We believe this information will be helpful to any state working to resolve its 2008 good neighbor status, including Wyoming.

On March 27, 2018, EPA issued a memo that includes EPA’s air quality modeling data for ozone for the year 2023 including projected ozone concentrations at potential nonattainment and maintenance receptor sites for the 2015 ozone NAAQS and projected upwind state contribution data. States may use this information as they develop or review state implementation plans to assure that emissions within their jurisdictions do not contribute significantly to nonattainment or interfere with maintenance of the 2015 ozone standards in other states. These plans are due in

EPA Ethics delivers initial ethics training in person (or, for appointees who are in regional offices, via conference call or video conference) to all Administratively Determined (AD) appointees. In that training, they specifically address conflicts of interest and impartiality, and inform the appointee about recusal issues. When the appointee files the financial disclosure report, EPA Ethics can more accurately assess possible financial conflict of interest issues and determines whether the appointee should issue a written recusal statement. If necessary, EPA Ethics drafts that document.

- c. For each appointee hired under the SDWA authority, please provide the date of their appointment; the date the appointment ended (if any); and the specific projects they worked on while serving as an administratively determined appointee.

Please see Attachment 1.

- d. For each employee hired by the EPA under the SDWA authority, Schedule C authority, or as Non-Career SES, provide the date on which their EPA e-mail address was created, and the date of their appointment, whether they worked at EPA in any capacity prior to their appointment date and if so, what capacity.

Please see Attachment 1.

- 41. In response to questions from Senator Merkley, you testified that a “Red Team / Blue Team” exercise to re-examine the underpinnings of climate science is still “under consideration” at EPA. According to Jim Lakely, the communications director of the Heartland Institute, EPA has “reached out to the Heartland Institute to help identify scientists who could constitute a red team,” and the Heartland Institute had been “happy to oblige.”¹⁹
 - a. Is Mr. Lakely telling the truth that EPA representatives reached out to the Heartland Institute for help identifying scientists who could participate in a Red Team/Blue Team exercise? If yes, why did EPA choose to contact the Heartland Institute?
 - b. Have representatives of the Heartland Institute provided representatives of EPA with a list of “scientists who could constitute a red team”? If yes, who are the Heartland Institute’s proposed participants?
 - c. Have any EPA representatives consulted with any other organizations, corporations, or individuals about potential individuals who could participate in a Red Team/Blue Team exercise? If yes, provide the names of those organizations, corporations, or individuals consulted, and the names of any proposed participants.

¹⁹ <http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/trump-administration-lining-up-climate-change-red-team/article/2629124>

- d. Do you know the names of any individuals or organizations who have contributed to the Heartland Institute? If yes, please provide the names of any such individuals or organizations with whom you have met in your capacity as EPA Administrator.
- e. Please provide a copy of all documents (including emails, white papers, meeting agendas, powerpoint presentations, memoranda and other materials) received or obtained by EPA related to the “Red Team/Blue Team” climate science effort.

Administrator Pruitt encourages an open, transparent debate on climate science – with a Red Team/Blue Team exercise being an option discussed to learn more about the questions around climate science.

42. A press report indicates that EPA’s Office of the Chief Financial Officer established a target for Region 9 to reduce their FTEs by 10% by the end of FY18. Has the CFO or anyone in the Administrator’s office provided other EPA regional offices or program offices with targets for reducing personnel by a specified percentage? If so, please provide each of the targets. Please also provide any document from the CFO or the Administrator’s office communicating an FTE or staff reduction target to any EPA region or program office for FY18 or future fiscal years.

The President’s Budgets for FY 2018 and FY 2019 include proposals for significant staffing reductions and those levels were considerations in the establishment of internal planning targets which were to be reevaluated after appropriations bills are passed and during the development of EPA’s Operating Plan. The effort is on-going. Recent flat-lined appropriations in the majority of EPA’s program projects, combined with payroll growth, have created challenges in meeting program requirements that are addressed with contracts or with grants. Taken together, these trends mean the agency must carefully manage workforce levels. Specific impacts vary depending on organizations’ current staffing levels and attrition rather than a set percentage.

EPA's enforcement efforts continue to be focused on achieving compliance, not on the number of individual actions taken. To achieve the desired outcome, EPA works in partnership with state and tribal agencies to assure compliance, protect public health and the environment, and ensure a level playing field for businesses. Recognizing that states are the primary implementers of our nation's environmental laws, EPA will focus where it can provide the most value including matters affecting multiple states or tribes, serving as a backstop when a state or tribe does not address serious noncompliance in a timely fashion, and assisting states and tribes when they lack the capability, resources, or will to address noncompliance.

In FY 2019, the agency is requesting 2,264.1 FTE for the civil, criminal, Superfund, and federal facilities enforcement programs.

CLIMATE IN DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN

76. You have said that “scientists continue to disagree about the degree and extent of global warming and its connection to the actions of mankind.”³² With regard to human-produced carbon dioxide, in an interview with CNBC, you said that, “I would not agree that it’s a primary contributor to the global warming that we see.”³³ But the statutorily required National Climate Assessment’s Climate Science Special Report that was released by the Trump Administration in November concluded that “human activities, especially emissions of greenhouse gases, are the dominant cause of the observed warming since the mid-20th century.”³⁴ Last year was the second-hottest year in recorded history, according to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and saw record-breaking costs incurred by extreme weather and climate disasters.
- a. Do you disagree with the conclusion made in the Climate Science Special Report by our country’s top scientists at 13 federal agencies, including your own, that human activities are the dominant cause of global warming, with “no convincing alternative explanation”?

EPA recognizes the challenges that communities face in adapting to a changing climate. EPA works with state, local and tribal governments to improve infrastructure to protect against the consequences of climate change and natural disasters. EPA also promotes science that helps inform states, municipalities, and tribes on how to plan for and respond to extreme events and environmental emergencies. Moving forward, EPA will continue to advance its climate adaptation efforts, and have reconvened the cross-EPA Adaptation Working Group in support of those efforts.

³² Pruitt, Scott and Luther Strange. “The Climate-Change Gang.” The National Review. May 17, 2016. Accessed January 31, 2018. <http://www.nationalreview.com/article/435470/climate-change-attorneys-general>

³³ DiChristopher, Tom. “EPA chief Scott Pruitt says carbon dioxide is not a primary contributor to global warming.” CNBC. March 9, 2017. Accessed February 1, 2018. <https://www.cnbc.com/2017/03/09/epa-chief-scott-pruitt.html>

³⁴ Wuebbles, D.J., and D.W. Fahey, K.A. Hibbard, D.J. Dokken, B.C. Stewart, and T.K. Maycock (eds.) “Climate Science Special Report.” U.S. Global Change and Research Program. November 2017. Accessed January 31, 2018. https://science.2017.globalchange.gov/downloads/CSSR2017_FullReport.pdf

Human activity impacts our changing climate in some manner. The ability to measure with precision the degree and extent of that impact, and what to do about it, are subject to continuing debate and dialogue.

77. Despite these findings, and the conclusion that “[c]hanges in the characteristics of extreme events are particularly important for human safety,”³⁵ climate change did not appear in the EPA’s Strategic Plan for 2018-2022, as published on February 12, 2018.
- a. Why does climate change not appear in the draft plan?
 - b. Do you intend to address climate in other strategic planning documents, commensurate with the findings of the Climate Science Special Report? If not, why not?

Strategic plans are drafted every five years to reflect new initiatives and projects of the Agency. Naturally the plan will be reflective of the current administration’s priorities of refocusing the Agency on its core mission, restoring power to the states through cooperative federalism, and leading the Agency through improved processes and adherence to the rule of law.

PERSONNEL

78. In the FY19 budget request, Science and Technology funding was cut from \$708,975,000 in the FY 2018 annualized CR to \$448,965,000—a decrease of 37 percent. The Regional Science and Technology funding was zeroed out entirely. This attack on science comes as more than 200 scientists have left the agency over the past year.
- a. How many full-time scientists will be supported at the EPA by the FY19 budget request?

Based on the distribution of scientific positions within the agency workforce, EPA would estimate that between 8,300 and 8,800 scientific positions would be supported through the FY 2019 Presidents Budget Request. This is an estimate extrapolated from on-board data that is current as of FY 2017 and includes non-federal positions. The actual number is dependent upon programmatic workforce decisions that remain to be made as well as factors such as attrition.

- b. Can you describe how the Regional Science and Technology capabilities will be fully replaced by the “ad hoc” efforts described in the Budget in Brief?

The Regional Science and Technology program performs laboratory analysis, field monitoring, and sampling investigations in order to provide credible scientific data on environmental pollutants and conditions to Agency

³⁵ Ibid.

Senator Sanders:

Climate Change

99. During a recent interview with KSNV TV, you stated:

“Is (global climate change) an existential threat? Is it something that is unsustainable, or what kind of effect or harm is this going to have? I mean, we know that humans have most flourished during times of what? Warming trends. I think there’s an assumption made that because the climate is warming, that (warming) is necessarily a bad thing. Do we really know what the ideal surface temperature should be in the year 2100? In the year 2018? I mean it’s fairly arrogant for us to think that we know exactly what it should be in 2100.”

The Trump Administration’s *Climate Science Special Report*, the United Nation’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s *Fifth Assessment Report*, and the Department of Defense’s *National Security Implications of Climate-Related Risks and a Changing Climate* report all found with high confidence that global climate change and rising global temperatures are likely to cause rising sea levels and increase crop failures, hunger, illness, and extreme weather. The Department of Defense’s report identified these factors as clear risks to the United States’ national security.

In January, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration published a technical report that predicted that rising global temperatures could cause global mean sea levels to rise over ten feet by 2100. This sea level rise would displace more than 30 million Americans and mostly or completely cover Cape Canaveral, the U.S. Naval Academy, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the John F. Kennedy International and San Francisco International airports, and the Mar-a-Lago resort, among other prominent localities. Given the level of destruction anticipated, would you consider these outcomes to “necessarily be a bad thing”?

In January, the peer-reviewed journal, *Nature Climate Change*, published a report predicting that 260,000 people around the world will die annually by 2100 due to decreasing air quality and rising global temperatures. If global climate change and decreasing air quality were to cause this level of increase in annual deaths, would you consider that outcome to “necessarily be a bad thing”?

In 2012, the independent humanitarian group DARA estimated that between 2012 and 2030, 150,000 people around the world will die annually due to infections and 360,000 people will die annually due to hunger and malnutrition related to rising global temperatures. If a warming climate were to cause this type of increase in illness, would you consider that outcome to “necessarily be a bad thing”?

The Union of Concerned Scientists estimates that if global warming emissions continue to grow unabated, the annual economic impact of more severe hurricanes, residential real-estate losses to sea-level rise, and growing water and energy costs could reach 1.9% of the U.S. GDP by 2100. They also estimate that a sea-level rise of 13-20 inches by 2100

would threaten insured properties in U.S. Northeast coastal communities valued at \$4.7 trillion. If a warming climate were to cause these types of economic impacts, would you consider that outcome to “necessarily be a bad thing”?

EPA recognizes the challenges that communities face in adapting to a changing climate. EPA works with state, local and tribal governments to improve infrastructure to protect against the consequences of climate change and natural disasters. EPA also promotes science that helps inform states, municipalities, and tribes on how to plan for and respond to extreme events and environmental emergencies. Moving forward, EPA will continue to advance its climate adaptation efforts, and have reconvened the cross-EPA Adaptation Working Group in support of those efforts.

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Lead

100. You have stated that “[l]ead poisoning is an insidious menace that robs our children of their intellect and their future.” This is especially true for children living in communities of color, who are most likely to suffer from lead exposure and poisoning. According to the Center for Disease Control, African American children are over three times as likely to have highly elevated blood-lead levels. African American and Latino communities are often more likely to live near active battery recyclers, industrial sites, or highways, and to live in older housing that are sources of high levels of lead. In addition, a 2012 study found that lead exposure resulted in greater cognitive detriment for children with a lower socioeconomic status. Scientists agree that there is absolutely no acceptable level of lead exposure for children.

Based on your own statement, will you commit to eradicating lead exposure for America’s children? How will you work with other leaders in the Administration to ensure the safety of our children, including those in more vulnerable communities?

Since the 1970s, EPA and other federal agencies have implemented numerous actions resulting in a significant reduction of lead exposure throughout our country and significantly lower blood lead levels in children. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, no safe blood lead level in children has been identified and even low levels of lead in blood have been shown to affect IQ, ability to pay attention, and academic achievement. Now, tackling the problem at this stage will benefit from a coordinated federal-wide effort. To this end, EPA is collaborating with our federal partners to address the remaining exposures and to explore ways to increase our relationships and partnerships with states, tribes, and localities. As Co-chair of the President’s Task Force on Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks to Children, EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt recently hosted a meeting of principals from the 17 Federal departments and agencies on the