

EPA

House Republicans query Pruitt about Superfund list

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Republican lawmakers in the House are asking U.S. EPA about how it developed its list of toxic waste sites needing "immediate, intense action" under the Superfund program. markzvo/Wikipedia

Senior House Energy and Commerce Committee Republicans are questioning U.S. EPA about how the agency crafted its list of Superfund toxic waste sites requiring "immediate, intense action."

Republican Reps. Greg Walden of Oregon, Fred Upton of Michigan and John Shimkus of Illinois sent a [letter](#) today to Administrator Scott Pruitt asking for more information on the list of 21 Superfund sites designated as the agency's highest priority.

EPA released the list this month, a day after Pruitt appeared before the Environment Subcommittee. Lawmakers quizzed him about sites at the hearing, but Pruitt didn't clue them in on which ones would be included on the list and why.

"During the Environment Subcommittee hearing the previous day, Members specifically asked you about the list, and despite many of the sites included being of particular

concern to Committee Members, we did not receive any indication from you that these sites would be included," said the lawmakers.

"The Superfund cleanup program already involves a significant amount of process, and it is not clear how creating another list of sites will expedite cleanups. Furthermore, it is not clear how the sites on the 'Top-21 List' were selected."

Walden is chairman of the full committee. Upton leads the Energy Subcommittee and Shimkus heads the Environment Subcommittee.

EPA spokesman Jahan Wilcox said, "We will respond to Congressmen Walden, Upton and Shimkus through the proper channel."

The lawmakers also noted in their letter that EPA has indicated so far there is "no commitment of additional funding" for sites included on the list.

"We question what it will mean for sites to be on the List and whether the potential stigma of being included on a list targeted for 'immediate, intense action' with no additional funding, will help or hinder the progress at these sites," the members said.

The lawmakers asked EPA for an explanation of what the agency means in providing "direct engagement" for the sites, as well as who was consulted when drafting the list. They said they would appreciate a response by Jan. 8.

The House Republicans may not get many documents. EPA's Superfund Task Force, which helped create the list, kept no internal records of its activities, according to the agency's response to Freedom Of Information Act litigation by watchdog group **Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility** ([Greenwire](#), Dec. 20).

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