

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY

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February 17, 2016

The Honorable Penny Pritzker
Secretary
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Secretary Pritzker,

The House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, as part of our oversight responsibility, is concerned that the Department of Commerce may be considering changing the composition of members of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Advisory Committee on Commercial Remote Sensing (ACCRES).

The purpose of ACCRES is to “provide information, advice, and recommendations to the Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere on matters relating to the U.S. commercial remote sensing space industry and NOAA’s activities to carry out the responsibilities of the Department of Commerce set forth in the National and Commercial Space Programs Act of 2010 (51 U.S.C. §60101 *et seq.*).”¹ The composition of ACCRES, according to its charter, “will have a fairly balanced membership consisting of approximately 9 to 15 members serving in a representative capacity.”² Today, ACCRES has 14 members, representing a cross-section of industry and academia, meeting the intent and purpose of the advisory committee. It has come to the attention of the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee that Department of Commerce officials may be considering changing the composition of ACCRES.

In order to assist the Committee in its oversight responsibilities, please address the following:

- Are Department of Commerce officials considering removing industry and academic members and replacing them with government officials from other Federal agencies?

¹ ACCRES Charter (March 3rd, 2014), available online at:
<http://www.nesdis.noaa.gov/CRSRA/files/ACCRES_Charter_3-13-14.pdf> (last accessed January 14th, 2016).

² *Id.*

- If Department of Commerce officials are considering removing industry and academic members and replacing them with government officials from other Federal agencies, please explain why NOAA/NESDIS is not able to communicate with and receive such information from other government agencies without going through a Federal advisory committee.
- In addition, please inform the Committee of any activities the Department is undertaking to change the Charter of ACCRES or the composition of its members to include government officials.

The Committee appreciates your consideration of this important issue. ACCRES serves an important role in providing advice to the Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere on matters relating to the U.S. commercial remote sensing space industry and the Committee supports the Department of Commerce's decision to reconstitute ACCRES in 2012.

Please respond to these inquiries by January 29, 2016. If you have any questions related to this request, please contact Dr. Michael Mineiro, Counsel, Subcommittee on Space, at 202-226-0354.

Sincerely,



Lamar Smith
Chairman



Brian Babin
Chairman
Subcommittee on Space