



COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE, SPACE, & TECHNOLOGY
Lamar Smith, Chairman

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Statement of Chairman Lamar Smith (R-Texas)

H.R. 1430, *Honest and Open New EPA Science Treatment Act of 2017*

Chairman Smith: H.R. 1430, the Honest and Open New EPA Science Treatment Act of 2017, or HONEST Act, is a short, four page, common-sense bill that simply requires the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to base its regulations on science that is publicly available, not secret.

In the last Congress, a similar bill, the Secret Science Act, passed the House with bipartisan support.

Today's legislation, which I introduced with Democratic Representative Henry Cuellar, ensures sound science is the basis for EPA decisions and regulatory actions.

The days of trust-me "science" are over. In our modern information age, federal regulations should be based only upon data that is available for every American to see and can be subjected to independent review. That's the scientific method.

We can all agree that the government should rely on the best available science. Unfortunately, the government does not always hold to this standard.

Looking at the EPA's past record, it is clear that the agency has not followed an open and honest process. For example, nearly every major air quality regulation from the previous administration was justified by studies using data that even the EPA hadn't seen.

This means that the EPA's claims about the costs and benefits of its regulations and the real risks they are meant to address cannot be independently evaluated by unbiased experts.

If EPA's mandates are really based on sound science, then show Americans the data. EPA's refusal to cooperate leads to the question: What are they hiding?

Perhaps the most burdensome Obama era regulation is the Clean Power Plan. This rule mandates what types of energy we can and cannot use and would regulate all of the nation's electricity supply.

The proposal would cost billions of dollars annually, kill thousands of jobs, and increase electricity costs for everyone, all while having a minimal benefit on the environment.

In fact, the Clean Power Plan would only reduce global temperatures by three one-hundredths of a degree Celsius and reduce sea level rise by the thickness of only three sheets of paper.

How can these miniscule benefits be justified, particularly given the adverse impacts of the regulation? Again, the EPA should show Americans the data they claim justifies their regulations.

We all care about the environment. We share a common goal to protect the lands we farm and the water we drink.

But if policies aren't based on legit science, stringent regulations and unachievable standards will result in economic hardship with little or no environmental benefit. In other words, the regulations would be all pain and no gain.

Instead of producing policies that protect the environment, it appears that the EPA is more concerned with pushing a political agenda. This is why outside independent review should be required. It's impossible to conduct a policy debate without all the facts.

The bill before us strengthens previous House-passed legislation in the 114th Congress, the Secret Science Reform Act. That bill also required the EPA to base its decisions on information available to scientists and the American public.

This year's legislation improves on the bill that passed in the last Congress. It adds provisions to better protect personally identifiable information and confidential business information.

It also stipulates that this bill does not retroactively apply to past regulations, but instead focuses on new regulations.

This allows the EPA to focus its limited resources on quality science that all researchers can examine. This bill will promote sound science and restore confidence in the EPA decision-making process.

This bill ensures that the EPA is not promoting a one-sided ideological agenda. The legislation provides an opportunity for the type of honest and accountable government that the American people want and deserve.

I urge my colleagues to support the HONEST Act.

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